

CHATTERJI

ATHARVAN

ZARATHUSTRA



SKC

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IGNCA

**Dr. Bhagawan Das, Bharatratna :—**

A fortunate accident introduced me to this fine work.

The Gatha I study from time to time finding the Sanskrit version and the learned notes interpreting the Zend words by the application of Paninis rules as illuminating and as astonishing. It seems to me that this aspect of the living Zoroastrian-religion as a bridge between Vedism and Islam has a great practical value at the present time in India.

**Sri K. Natarajan :—**

I am deeply impressed by the wide range, the deep insight and the monumental erudition of the author.

**Dr. S. Radhakrishnan :—**

I am sure this publication will prove a valuable contribution towards the study of the Avesta in the light of Vedic literature.

**Mahamahopadhyay Gopinath Kaviraj, M. A., D-Litt.**

Padma-Bibhushan :—

The next conclusion of the author is simply startling. He says that Sufisim is not only, not a natural development of Islam, but that it came into being inspite of the stubborn opposition of orthodox Islam; and that it is a revival of Gathic Cisti. The significance of this view for establishing a relation of harmony between the Hindus and the Muslim is very great.

\* \* \* \*

The book is a very important and useful publication and unique in its implications.

I would recommend this book to the attention of august learned bodies like Sahitva Akademi and Jnanapitha

**Mahamahopadhyay Pandit Vidhu Sekhar Sastri :—**

The author is an earnest student of Mazda-Yasnianl ore and comparative religion. .... Readers will be greatly benefited by being acquainted with some of the noblest thoughts in the sacred writings of the two ancient peoples the Indians and Iranians.





গ্রন্থকার ও তাঁহার কৃতি সম্বন্ধে কতিপয় ভারতীয় মণীষীর  
অভিমত :—

মহামহোপাধ্যায় শ্রীযুক্ত গোপীনাথ কবিরাজ  
এম-এ, ডি-লিট, পদ্মভূষণ :—

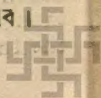
“মণীষী যতীন্দ্রমোহন চট্টোপাধ্যায় লিখিত সূফী—গাথাখানা পাঠ  
করিয়া বিশেষ আনন্দ ও বহু শিক্ষা লাভ করিয়াছি। লেখকের  
চিন্তাশীলতা,, বহুদর্শিতা ও সমীক্ষাপটুতা পুস্তকখানির প্রতি পৃষ্ঠায়  
দেদীপ্যমান রহিয়াছে।



এই গ্রন্থের ভূমিকাতে তত্ত্ব জিজ্ঞাসুর অবশ্য জ্ঞাতব্য বহু বিষয়  
আছে। আশা করি সহৃদয় পাঠক সমাজে ইহা সমুচিত আদর লাভ  
করিবে, এবং যোগ্য বিদ্বৎগণের হৃদয়ে ইহা সমুচিত অনুসন্ধিৎসার  
প্রেরণা দান করিবে।

বঙ্গীয় সংস্কৃত শিক্ষা পরিষদ ও রামকৃষ্ণ মিশন  
ইন্সটিটিউট অব কালচার এবং কলিকাতা হাই-  
কোর্টের প্রাক্তন বিচারপতি শ্রীযুক্ত প্রশান্তবিহারী  
মুখোপাধ্যায় :—

গ্রন্থকার আজীবন শিখ ও সূফী ধর্ম লইয়া বহু গবেষণা  
করিয়াছেন। সেই সব গবেষণা যেমন মৌলিক, তেমনই নতুন কালের  
দিগন্তদর্শী। তাঁর গবেষণার প্রধান অবদান তাঁর আবিষ্কার। শিখ  
ধর্ম, সূফী ধর্ম ও হিন্দুধর্মের এক নিবিড় রহস্যময় সংযোগ যার সূত্র  
বেদে। এই বিষয়ে গ্রন্থকার যে সব ঐতিহাসিক ও আধ্যাত্মিক তথ্য  
আবিষ্কার ও সংগ্রহ করিয়াছেন তাহা অমূল্য, অতুলনীয় ও অভিনব।



# ATHARVAN ZARATHUSTRA —The Foremost Prophet

[ A Comparative Study of Hinduism, Zoroastrianism and Islam ]

महद् देवानाम् असुरत्वम् एकम् —Rigveda 3-55-1

( All the Devas are concentrated in Mazda )

**Jatindra Mohan Chatterji, M. A.**

*With a Foreword by*

**The Hon'ble Chief Justice Mr. S. P. Kotval,  
High Court, Bombay**

*and a Preface by*

**Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj,  
M. A., D. Litt., Padma-Vibhushan**





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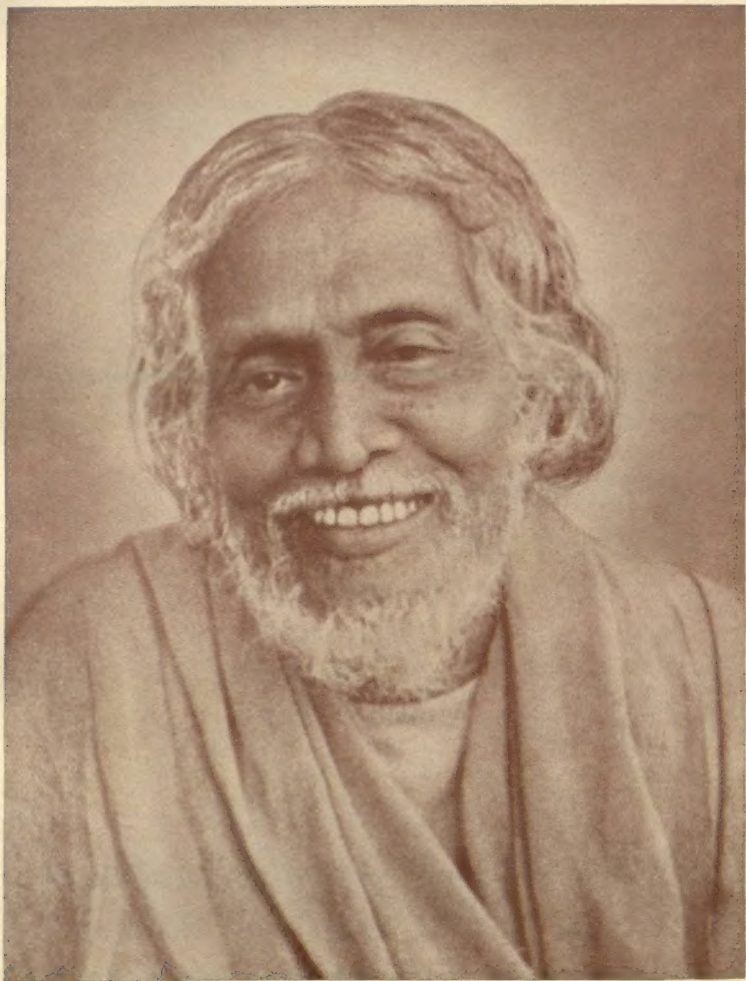
To  
The Sacred Memory  
of

**Sri Sri Premananda Tirthaswami Maharaj**

Who had visioned Mazda and could  
therefore easily induce in others  
the belief in the existence  
of Mazda.

—Jatindra





SRI SRI PREMANANDA TIRTHASWAMI  
( 1871—1959 )



Indira Gandhi National  
Centre for the Arts



ॐ ह्रीं क्लीं ॥ ॐ ह्रीं क्लीं ॥ ॐ ह्रीं क्लीं ॥  
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Yasna—29-4

मज्झिमासु सखारे महिरितो,  
 या जी वावेरेजोइ पइरीचिथीत ।  
 देवाहश् चा मध्याईश् चा,  
 या चा वरेशइते अइपीचिथीत ।  
 ह्यो वीचिरो अहुरो,  
 अथा ने अह् हत् यथा ह्यो वसत् ॥

MAZDA is the only adorable.

Whatever has been done heretofore by men and devas,  
 or will be done hereafter, He AHURA, is the Judge  
 thereof. None can resist His will.

Yasna—29-4

## **PUBLISHERS' NOTE**

This book is a reprint, with several additions, of the Introduction to the author's "Hymns of Atharvan Zarathushtra" published by us in 1967. A thousand copies were printed, and they have run out, which shows that there is a demand for such books and we decided to reprint the Introduction as a separate volume as it contains much original research.

Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj M. A., D. Lit., Padma Vibhushan, one of the highest living authorities on Sanskrit studies, has described the conclusions of the author as "startling" and has referred to the book as "a very important and useful publication, and unique in its implications".

The main conclusions of the author are :

(i) Atharvan Zarathushtra existed at the time of the Rigveda and thus the age of the Prophet cannot be placed later than 3000 B. C.

(ii) Ahura Mazda has been worshipped in the Rigveda under the names Asura Vedhas and Asura Mahat. This shows that the relations between the forbears of the Hindus and the Parsis were friendly.

(iii) Sufism, which is an essential part of Islam, is nothing but a reproduction of the Chishti of the Gatha, grafted on the original Islam.

These conclusions serve to link together Hinduism, Zoroastrianism and Islam and bring about a complete

revolution in the current views about the mutual relationship among these three great religions.

Once again the Association makes no claim that the conclusions drawn by Sri Chatterji are infallible, and it is quite possible that scholars may differ very strongly with the particular views taken by the author. It must, however, be remembered that these conclusions and views are the result of a life-time of deep and devoted study and we therefore present them to the learned public in all humility.

The Association wishes to acknowledge its grateful thanks to the Godrej Trust of Bombay whose munificence has made the publication of this book possible.

**THE PARSİ ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION**

1, Saklat Place,

Calcutta 13.

April, 1971





# FOREWORD

By

*The Hon'ble Chief Justice Mr. S. P. Kotval,  
High Court, Bombay.*

Though Chatterji's thesis is intituled "Atharvan Zarathustra" it is really a fascinating study in comparative religions. It was Darmesteter who said "As the Parsis are the ruins of a people, so are their "Sacred Books" the ruins of a religion. There has been no other great belief in the world that ever left such poor and meagre monuments of its past splendour. Yet great is the value which that small book the Avesta, and the belief of that scanty people, the Parsis, have in the eyes of the historian and the theologian, as they present to us, the last reflex of the ideas which prevailed in Iran during the five centuries that preceded, and the seven centuries that followed the birth of Christ : a period which gave to the world, the Gospels, the Talmud and the Quran.....By the help of the Parsi religion and the Avesta we are enabled to go back to the very heart of that most momentous period in the history of religious thought which saw the blending of the Aryan mind with the Semitic". \*

Jatindra Mohan Chatterji's thesis proves the truth of this statement though it disproves the chronology mentioned in the above statement. Most students of comparative philology are struck by the marked closeness between the grammar, metre and style of the Rigveda and the Gathas.



It made Dhalla remark that the "Gathic inflexions are more primitive than the Vedic. The period of the composition of the Gathas, therefore, cannot be separated from the Vedas by any considerable distance of time." ( History of Zoroastrianism, p. 13 ),

In this volume Chatterji has in a more detailed study shown beyond cavil that connection. Drawing inspiration from entirely original sources the learned author not merely uses the facts of history but also philological comparisons with devastating effect. Himself an eminent Sanskritist, he may be pardoned for drawing deeply from Vedic and Puranic sources, but his comparisons and deductions are so telling, the total effect of his ratiocination so convincing, as to leave one dazed and breathless.

A few examples will suffice.

(1) To prove that the Rigveda itself refers to Zarathustra he quotes the following passage :—

“प्र तद् दुःशीमे पृथवाने वेने  
प्र रामे वोचम् असुरे मघवतसु ॥

(Rigveda 10-93-14)

[ I would now speak of Rama, the incomparable Seer of Parthia, and also about Asura (Ahura) and the Maghavats (Magis) ].

“Evidently ‘Rama’ here refers to Parsu-Rama (the Rama of Persia—Zarathustra), for Raghu Rama (the Indian Rama), had very little concern with Ahura or Magians....The original designation of Parsu Rama had been simply Rama and it is by this name that he is very often described in the Mahabharata and the Puranas.....That Rama was an honourable term in Iran, is evident from Rama being the name of a Yazata (vide Rama Yasht).....Parsu is the Vedic name for Persia..... Zarathustra was designated Parsu Rama because he belonged to the land of Persia.” ( p. 22, 23 )

(2) "Bhrigu was the preceptor of the Asura-worshippers and Angirasa the preceptor of the Deva-worshippers. The Bhrigu people adopted Mazda Yasna and Angirasa people stuck to Deva Yasna.....

Thus there grew up a dissension between the Bhrigus and the Angirases. The Bhrigus occupied the western regions, the Angirases spread eastward. Indra is called अंगिरसम्, the greatest patron of the Angirases (Rigveda 1-100-4). He predominated in Sapta Sindhu (Rig 8-24-27) i. e. the eastern provinces.

We may trace references to the Angirases and the Bhrigus even in the Gatha. The Gatha says that the Angirases devised the practice of icon-worship,

“या अन्ग्रया करपनो उरुपयेइन्ती” Yasna 48-10

The difference between the Bhrigus and the Angirases resulted in the compilation of a supplementary Veda (the Atharva Veda—the Veda of the Fire Priest)” (pages 43-44).

(3) “Then again the formula ‘*Bismilla hir Rahman-ir Rahim*’ which is prefixed to every Sura of the Koran, except one, is only the Arabic translation of the Avestic formula ‘*Ba nam i Yazdan Bakhshayandeh wa Bakhshaishgar*’ which occurs in the Khordeh Avesta—a manual compiled by Mobed Maharaspand in the Sassanian period.” ( page 137 ).

(4) “Thus for two of its cardinal principles, (viz. monotheism and aniconism) Islam is indebted to Mazda Yasna indirectly through the medium of Judaism and Christianity.

Mark of direct influence is also not wanting. Take for instance the word “DIN” ( religion ), a very central word of Islamic theology. It is the direct adoption of the Daena of the Gatha ( धेना of the Veda ). Similarly the word “Sirat” which occurs in the first Sura of the Koran, is nothing else than the “Cinvat” bridge of the Gatha.” ( page 137 ).



By such comparisons and reasoning the learned author reaches three major conclusions :—

1. Bhagawan Zarathustra who had flourished in the Vedic period is the first prophet of the Aryan race.

“The Gatha is contemporaneous with the later portions of the Rigveda and may have been composed about 3500 B. C. The next prophet Bhagawan Ramchandra came down one thousand years later (about 2500 B. C.) The third prophet Sri Krishna came down after another one thousand years i. e. about 1500 B. C. Another 1000 years passed and Gautma Buddha made his appearance. With him the historic age starts. To seek to make Dharmaraja (Prophet) Zarathustra more or less a contemporary of Gautama Buddha is the height of frivolity”. ( pages 11, 12 )

2. Since this is his basic finding, it is inevitable that Chatterji must seek for and uncover the influence of Mazda Yasna on Judaism and Islam and thereby fortify his fundamental conclusion. He gives the most convincing proofs of the interaction. A direct influence on the prophet Mohammad was his friendship with Salman the Persian, who was born a Zarthusrian but later converted to Christianity and then to Islam. The other influence was the rise of the Persian School of Sufism. “We do not mean to say that Sufism cannot be elicited out of the Koran. That it can, has been proved satisfactorily by the skill of Jalal, the Prince of the Sufis. All that we intend to say is that Sufism is pre-eminently the product of the Gatha and not of the Koran”. ( page 174 )

3. There is the author's principal doctrine, that Mahatma Zarathustra's teaching shaped post Vedic Hinduism “When the Rigveda accepts Mazda, as the sole representative of all the Devas, it is perversity to hold that there is more difference between the Hindu and the Parsi,

than there is between the right arm and the left arm." (p.244); and that its influence in India can still be seen through the Sikh Religion. "Kabir shows the way how one may practise the principles of Mazda Yasna in modern conditions of life". (p. 241).

There is no doubt that some of the findings of the learned author will be disputed in the days to come, especially the basic finding which places the existence of Maha Ratu Zarathustra round about 3500 B. C. In that he has ranged against him high authority—Jackson,<sup>1</sup> West,<sup>2</sup> Darmesteter<sup>3</sup> and Dhalla<sup>4</sup>—a formidable array. But it is the essence of all research and scholarship, not to accept conclusions howsoever certain and reached by person, howsoever eminent, but to examine for oneself each proposition in the cold light of reason. Chatterji has done just that and done it to perfection. The evidence he has marshalled is cogent and clear; his findings are given with a master's touch. One may quarrel with some of his conclusions but one cannot help admire the transparent honesty and brilliance of his statements. His deductions will require no small refutation, if refutation there can be.

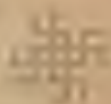
Meanwhile the message of the book must be carried into every Indian home. All religion is but concerned with the worship of one and the same preternatural Force—call it a God or a Divine Being or the Divine Spirit. Men differ only in their mode of recognition and the form of worship of that Force. The source of the great religions of the world, whose

- 
1. Zoroaster : The Prophet of Ancient Iran by Prof. A. V. William Jackson, pages 14-15.
  2. Dr. E.W. West : Introduction to Pahlavi Texts translated—Secred Books of the East edited by Prof. F. Max Muller Vol. 47—Introduction p. 38.
  3. Sup. Cit.
  4. Zoroastrian Civilization—p. 24.

history the author traces, is the same. They cannot and ought not to differ today.

For our Parsi friends the learned author has a special message which I commend to them. I cannot do better than reproduce his own words.

"The Religion of the Gatha has got the merits of Islam, viz. simplicity and vigour. It has got the additional merit of being the complementary associate of Hinduism, the most comprehensive of all religions. It is bound to spread; but this cannot happen by mere pious wish. Every Parsi has his part to play. He must have personal touch with the gospel of the Holy Prophet."





## PREFACE \*

By

Mahamahopadhyaya **Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj, M. A.,**  
D. Litt., Padma-Vibhushan.

I have been requested to write a few words about the merit of this book and I do so with much pleasure ; for Jatin Babu has been engaged in Zoroastrian studies for over forty years and the book that he has produced has got some very remarkable features.

Many conclusions suggested by the author in this learned work throw a flood of new light in the matter of Indo-Iranian religious development.

(1) The author quotes a *mantra* of the Rigveda (1-156-2) wherein Vishnu has been called नवीयस् वेधस्—New Mazda, p. 66.

This suggests that the evolution of the ideal of Vishnu, the God of Love, is the result of the impact with Mazda-Yasna. Maxmuller identifies Mazda of the Avesta with Vedhas of the Rigveda (see Maxmuller's Science of Mythology, p. 126.)

(2) He quotes a *mantra* of the Atharva—Angirasa Veda (1-10-1) wherein Angra-Manyu of the Avesta has been transliterated as Ugra Manyu (p. 75).

This passage testifies the close intercourse between Vedic and Avestic people, and it shows that the Angirasa Veda was compiled subsequently to the Yasna (of Avesta).

(3) He quotes a *mantra* of the Yajur Veda ( 2-30 ) which uses the word 'Asura' as meaning a formless (disincarnate) God (p. 26).

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\*This Preface had originally been written for "The Hymns of Atharvan Zarathustra." The present volume is a reproduction, with several additions of the Introduction to that book.



This suggests that the Deva-Sura war (which is the main story of the Puranas) may ultimately be resolved into a quarrel between the followers of iconic ( साकार ) and aniconic ( निराकार ) modes of worship (p. 27).

The author holds that the worship of God Hari-Medhas ( which may be said to mark the beginning of the Pancha-Ratra sect) is an attempt at assimilating Mazda-Yasna in India. He supposes that the name 'Hari-Medhas' of the Mahabharata, is nothing else than a Sanskritised version of Ahura Mazda (p. 18).

Again from the fact that all the three brothers Dhrita-rastra, Pandu and Vidura had married Iranian brides, he comes to the conclusion, that up to the time of the Mahabharata, the Indians and the Iranians were socially one people (p. 117).

Similarly from the fact that the language of the rock-edicts of Darius is indistinguishable from that of Ashoka's inscriptions, he infers that the Indians and Iranians spoke the same language up to 6th century B. C. (p. 121).

All these inferences are very novel, and one may say, quite astonishing. The author's identification of the two Manyus (Spenta and Angra) of the Avesta, with the two Gunas (Satwa and Tamas) of the Veda (p. 82), and his supposed co-relation between "Om" of the Hindus and "Hon" of the Parsis (p. 47), as well as his discourse on the similarity between Mazda-Yasna and original Saiva cult, (p. 61) is also no less interesting.

Some other very important conclusions of the author may be noted below. These are :

- (a) Fixing the date of Atharvan Zarathushtra ( p. 10 ).

On the basis of the allusions in the Rigveda and the Mahabharata, the author holds that the age of Atharvan Zarathushtra would be somewhere earlier than three thousand B. C. In any case, he refutes the popular assumption that

Zarathushtra flourished about one thousand B. C. The cult of Hari Medhas alone, as described in the Mahabharata is, according to the author, enough to establish the pre-Mahabharata age of Zarathushtra (p. 16).

(b) Linking the Achaemenian dynasty of Persia with the Kurus of the Mahabharata (p. 119).

On the basis of the term "Kshatriya", which status Darius claims for himself in his rock edicts, the author infers that the Achaemenian emperors were of Indian extraction. For "Kshatriya" as the designation of the warrior class, is unknown to the Avesta. The term used in the Avesta is either Verejena or Rathestar. The name Kuru itself (known to us only in the Greek version Cyrus) which is the name of a predecessor of Darius, (Darya Vahu—long-armed), lends considerable support to this conclusion (p. 119).

(c) Tracing the origin of Sufism to the Gatha ( p. 159 ).

The next conclusion of the author is simply startling. He says that Sufism is not only not a natural development of Islam, but that it came into being, in spite of the stubborn opposition of orthodox Islam, and that it is a revival of Gathic Chisti ( p. 174). The significance of this view, for establishing a relation of harmony between the Hindus and the Muslims, is very great. If Jalaluddin's Masnavi, in spite of its being the restoration of Avestic philosophy, could be accepted as an indispensable part of the Islamic structure (p. 184), there is little sense in putting a ban on Rabindranath, on the ground of his exerting un-Islamic influence. Preservation of the pristine purity of Islam (i. e. the purging of non-Arabic elements) is said to be the main idea behind the etiology of Pakistan (p. 223) as conceived by Dr. Iqbal (p. 227), and this operated to expand the gulf of difference between the Hindus and the Musalmans.





The underlying idea of the book under review is the integration of the Indian religions :

(1) Buddhism, as the development of the Karma Yoga discipline of the Vedanta,

(2) Jainism, as the development of its Dhyana Yoga discipline, and

(3) Sikhism as a variety of the cult of Agama (Tantra), —all easily come in the way. Sufism as the revival of the Gathic Chisti, accommodates the protestant sections of the Vedic Church such as (4) the Brahmo Samaj and (5) the Arya Samaj, as well as (6) the Sufi Muslims under the lead of Kabir (p. 200). It is claimed by the author that (7) Zoroastrianism represents the original form of the Saiva cult. (p. 52).

The idea is alluring. Even those who may not agree with all the views of the author, will find in the book many valuable suggestions, calculated to establish a relation of friendship and harmony between the various religious communities of India.

The idea however, is not a mere pious wish for the author, In support of his theories, he puts in beneath his structure, a large quantity of solid ground, by way of relevent quotations which he has meticulously collected from Hindu, Zoroastrian and Sufi scriptures.

Each of the theories propounded by the author is very consequential, and may easily form the subject matter of a thesis for a Doctorate, and all of them deserve careful scrutiny by erudite scholars who have specialised in Indo-Iranian studies. The book is a very important and useful publication, and unique in its implications.

I would recommend this book to the attention of august learned bodies, like the Sahitya Akadami and the Jnana Pitha.



# Atharvan Zarathustra

## —THE FOREMOST PROPHET

विदुष् टे विश्वा भुवनानि तस्य ।

ता प्रब्रवीषि वरुणाय वेधस् ॥

Rigveda 4-42-7

All the world knows Him ; only they call Varuna by the name "Vedhas".

—o—

The Veda is the oldest book in the world's library. Antiquity is claimed also for the papyrus rolls of Egypt but they do not go so far back as five thousand B. C. This is the time when the composition of the Veda started, as Tilak, the great Vedic scholar has proved on astronomical data<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, the papyrus rolls are mere scrolls and fragments, and not a complete book like the Veda<sup>2</sup>.

The Veda originally consisted of three books, viz (1) the Rik or the book of poetry (2) the Yajus or the book of prose and (3) the Saman or the book of songs<sup>3</sup>. The Rigveda is the original book ; Yajus and Saman are merely liturgical compilations<sup>4</sup>.

To these three Vedas was subsequently added the supplementary Veda or the Atharva Veda<sup>5</sup>.

The Atharva Veda consists of two books, the Bhargava Samhita and Angirasa Samhita. This is why to the Atharva Veda, the double-barelled name of Bhrigu-Angirasi Samhita ( भृग्वंगिरसी संहिता ) has been given by the Gopatha Brahmana<sup>6</sup>.

1. Tilak—Orion, p. 206

2. Dhirendranath Pal—Religion of the Hindus, p.1.

3. Jaimini—Purva Mimansa ( Sutras 2-1-32 to 2-1-34 )

4. Griffith—Hymns of the Atharva Veda, Preface, p. 2.

5. i) Macdonell—History of Sanskrit Literature, p. 196

ii) Bloomfield—Atharva Veda and Gopatha Brahmana, p. 56

6. Bloomfield—Hymns of the Atharva Veda—Introduction, p. 23

Unlike the three original Vedas which derive their names from the nature of the composition, these two books derive the names from their authors<sup>1</sup>.

It is to be noted that the two supplements are not the two parts of the same book, as is sometimes wrongly supposed by some persons, who take the current Indian Atharva Angirasa Veda to be the whole of the Atharva Veda. These are two separate books. This is why the Gopatha Brahmana counts the number of the Vedas to be five—by adding Bhargava and Angirasa Vedas to the original three—Rik, Yajus and Saman. The Bhargava Veda is required to be added in order to make the number five<sup>2</sup>. The Mahabharata also states the number of the Vedas to be five. Vyasa taught the four Vedas to his four disciples, and the fifth Veda to his son.

चत्वारस् ते वयं शिष्याः गुरुपुत्रस्तु पंचमः ।

इह वेदाः प्रतिष्ठेरन् एषः वः काक्षितः वरः ॥

—Santi Parva 335-40

Some people may be inclined to think that the Bhargava Veda is an imaginary book—imagined out of the appellation Bhrigu-Angirasi Samhita. Such supposition is unjustified. The Iranian name of the book is Avesta. To Panini, the book was quite familiar even in its Iranian name. To him, the word उपस्था was so important, that he felt himself called upon to compose a separate Sutra (1-3-25) for its derivation. There is no doubt that the Avesta is the scripture of Ahura-worship; and the preceptor of Ahura-worship is, in India, called Bhrigu. There should not therefore be any doubt that the Avesta is the scripture of Bhrigu, and that its Indian name would more aptly be Bhargava Samhita. To fail to see in the Avesta the Scripture of Bhrigu, is to be blind to actual

1. Griffith—Hymns of the Atharva Veda, preface, p. 1.

2. i) Bloomfield—Atharva Veda and Gopatha Brahmana, p. 8

ii) Bloomfield—Hymns of the Atharva Veda, Introduction, p.xxii.

facts. नैषः स्थाणोर् अपराधः यद् एनं अन्धो न पश्यति (Sayana)—[it is not the fault of the stick, that the blind man does not find it.] It is like the wiseacre of the parable of Ramakrishna Paramhansa, who saw the house of his neighbour burnt down, but refused to believe in its truth, for want of an authenticated report about it in any newspaper.

अयं मुषफ्फेल, रेस्तेइ वर पाय वन्द ।

ता ज़ खुद हम गुम नगरदी, अय लबन्द ॥

Masnavi, 3-309

[Ye fool, tie a rope round your leg. Otherwise you will miss yourself ( fail to recognize yourself to be you ) in the crowd.]

We do not want to miss the Bhargava Veda for want of a report in the newspapers.

In any case there are two currents in the Atharva Veda—the Bhargava current and the Angirasa current. As Bhrigu is the Preceptor of the Asuras ( the Prophet of the Asura-worshippers ), it is very likely that the Bhargava current is the effect of the Iranian influence. For a proper understanding of the Atharva Veda, it is necessary to apprehend the distinct features of the Bhargava current. It is likely that the doctrines of Bhrigu, the reputed Prophet of the Asura cult, bear considerable resemblance to the doctrines of Zarathustra, the actual Prophet of the Ahura cult. Thus a knowledge of the doctrines of Zarathustra is indispensable for the adequate comprehension of the Atharva Veda, whether it consists of two books, or two currents only. We may proceed to examine how far the philosophy of Zarathustra is reflected in the vedic literature.

The Bhargava Veda and the Angirasa Veda came into existence after the Indo-Iranians became divided on the question of monotheism and iconolatry. Bhrigu or Sukra is



the priest of the Asuras (i.e. worshippers of Asura). The Asuras emphasised the importance of monotheism and aniconic (निराकार) worship. Angirasa or Brihaspati was the priest of the Devas (i. e. worshippers of Deva). These people were not so punctilious on these points.

The popular name of the Bhargava Veda is Zend Avesta. There is a difference of opinion about the meaning of the word 'Zend.' Some say that it is the name of the language in which the Avesta is written. Others say that the word means "commentary", and Zend Avesta means, Avesta along with its commentary (Avesta ba Zend). It would however appear that 'Avesta' is the principal word and 'Zend' only qualifies it.

Zend corresponds to the Sanskrit term छान्द । छन्दस् is another name for the Veda, as the Medini Kosa says ( छन्दः पद्ये च वेदे च, 'स्वैराचारा भिलाषयोः ) । And छन्द is a variant of छन्दस् by the Vartika लोर् अन्त्योर् लोपः (vide "Katantra Chanda Sutra" by Chandra Kanta Tarkalankara). The Vartika says that vedic nouns often drop the final स् and ःन् optionally. Thus छान्द means Vedic and उपस्था means a hymn, as stated by Panini ( उपान् मन्त्रकरणे 1-3-25 ). And so छान्द उपस्था ( Zend Avesta ) means a Book of Vedic hymns. The word was so important to Panini that he had to compose a separate rule for its derivation, in spite of the fact that Sanskrit grammarians would not add even half a syllable, if that could be helped ( अर्धमात्रालाघवेन पुत्रोत्सवं मन्यन्ते वैयाकरणाः ) ।

The Avesta is divided into four books (1) Yasna—the book of hymns (2) Yasta—the book of prayers (3) Visparatu—the book of universal prayers and (4) Vidaivadata—the book of laws. The Yasna is the main scripture and the other three books are subsidiary to it. There are 72 chapters in the Yasna. 17 chapters out of them go to form the Gatha. They are reputed to be the words of prophet Zarathushtra himself <sup>1</sup>, just as the Gita is reputed to be the

1. Gatha o Zarathushtrahe ( Yasna 57—8 )

words of Govinda Krishna himself. The Gatha is embedded in the Yasna, as the Gita is included in the Mahabharata.

The Gatha is the cream of the Avesta. It teaches all those noble principles which Maha-Ratu Zarathustra wanted the people to learn. Even if all three other books are by some accident lost, the Parsis would still be able to reclaim themselves with the help of the Gatha alone. If the Gatha is lost, all is lost ; if the Gatha remains nothing is lost. The Gatha is to the Parsi what the Gita is to the Hindu, the Dhammapada to the Buddhist, the Uttar-Adhyayana Sutra to the Jaina and the Japji to the Sikh. It is as important to the Parsi as the Lord's prayer is to the Christian and the Surat-ul-Fatiha to the Muslim. It brings him hope in life and consolation in death.

The word Gatha comes from the root गे—to sing. This celestial song is the message of Maha-Ratu Zarathustra, the first and the foremost Prophet of mankind. First, because we know of no other prophet, Aryan, Semitic, Chinese or of any other race who is earlier to Zarathustra. No doubt there had been some vedic sages who are earlier to Zarathustra, because Deva-Yasna was current when Atharvan Zarathustra came into the world, but they had composed only stray hymns ; none had composed a systematic scripture—an Upanisad. And Zarathustra is foremost, because the gospel that he brought (the Gatha), is the earliest scripture of the Cisti cult, which (under the name of Sufism) is still the fascination of India and Iran ; and Religion is said to be the most conspicuous contribution of these two countries to the world <sup>1</sup>.

Artharvan Zarathustra may be said to be still reigning over Asia in spite of all appearances to the contrary, in spite of the smallness of the number of persons who to-day profess Zarathustrianism. For the multitude that follow his ideal

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1. Griswold—God Varuna in the Rigveda, p. 4.

unconsciously (i. e. without the knowledge that it is Zarathustra's ideal that they are following) is vast indeed. They would turn to Zarathustra, if only they come to learn that it is nothing but the ray of the sun that is reflected by the moon. Jalal, the apostle of Sufism, conveys the suggestion (of turning to the sun of sufism) in guarded language.

शमस चुन आलीतर आमद, खुद ज़ माह् ।

पस ज़िया अज़ नुर अफज़न, दान ब जाह ॥

Masnavi, 4-20

[ Leave the crescent ; turn to Golden Sun ( ज़रत् = golden उष्ट्र—sun).]

It was about 3500 B. C. that Maha-Ratu Zarathustra was born in Iran. Even in very early youth this exalted messenger of God took up the challenge of religion. He found around himself worshippers of Varuna, who stuck to monotheism and laid considerable importance on moral character. He found around him worshippers of Indra who were less scrupulous about monotheism and less careful about the place of morality in religious discipline. Both the parties, however, asserted that God (Varuna or Indra) could be seen and that the highest object of life was to see God.

Zarathustra wanted to know for himself. He would see God, if God was visible, and hear Him, if He was audible. He would learn from Rudra (Lord) Himself, the best way of realising Him.

At the age of twenty Spitama Zarathustra left his parents' home and went up to the Sabilan hills, standing by lake Urumia. He took up a life of hard sadhana (discipline) and deep meditation, determined to get at the truth, or lose his life in the attempt. It is said that when the yearning has reached such poignancy that the aspirant cannot relish any other desire except the desire of God, cannot cherish any other thought except the thought of God, the ground has

been prepared for the vision of Mazda, and Mazda now hastens to the devotee.

The ardent zeal of Asho Zarathustra did not fail to evoke response from the Highest Lord. If it had failed, all talk about God and religion would have been mere myth. For there had not been a soul, more serious, more zealous and more holy. Ahura Mazda made his appearance to the Holy Prophet and taught him all the secrets of religion and these are embodied in the Gatha.

### Age of the Prophet

There has been a long controversy about the time when the great prophet of Iran flourished. Attempt has been made to drag down his age to one thousand B. C. Unfortunately the two premier Iranologists, Jackson and Browne, support this view. Their opinion carries considerable weight and there is a tendency to accept this date as final. But even great Homer sometimes nods, and it is worthwhile to examine the soundness of the reasonings on which this opinion is based. The reasons put forth by Jackson are mainly two, viz :

1. That all the Arabic historians agree that Vistaspa, who was the first patron of the Zarathustrian church, is the same person as Hystaspas, the father of Darius who flourished about 800 B. C. This view, if accepted, brings the age still lower by 200 years.
2. That there is a tradition amongst the Parsis, that Asho Zarathustra flourished 300 years before the expedition of Alexander. This would bring down the date by another 200 years.

Now Koran is the earliest book in Arabic language.<sup>1</sup> Koran began to be composed about 610 A. D. and all Arabic histories are subsequent productions. Thus even accepting 1000 B. C.

1. i) Browne—Literary History of Persia, Vol I, p. 271

ii) Gibb—Arabic Literature, p. 25



to be the age of the Holy Prophet, these historians are separated from Zarathustra by 1600 years and considerable reliance may not be placed on their accuracy.

As regards the alleged Parsi tradition, there is also another Parsi tradition (also noted by Jackson) that Spitama Zarathustra had flourished six thousand years before the time of Alexander. No reason has been stated by Jackson why one tradition should be preferred to the other.

Jackson himself is not satisfied that Hystaspas, the father of Darius, is the same person as Vistaspa, the patron of the Zarathustrian church. Except for the similarity between the two sounds, there is no other data for establishing the identity. On the other hand the names of all the predecessors and successors of Hystaspas are quite different from the names of the forefathers and lineal descendants of Vistaspa. Then again a considerable time must have elapsed before the loose "Ahura Mazda" (which form was current at the time of Vistaspa) changed into composite "Ahuramazda" (which is the form current in Achaemenian times).<sup>1</sup> All the same, Jackson bases his conclusion on these two flimsy data—viz the similarity in the sounds of Hystaspas and Vistaspa and the alleged Parsi tradition—and holds the age of Zarathustra to be one thousand B. C. We can only say that this is very unfortunate.

The argument of Browne is stranger still. He does not enter into the merit of the question. His only premise seems to be that the opinion of a scholar like Jackson should not be easily rejected.<sup>2</sup>

Thus in spite of the authority of the two greatest Iranologists, 1000 B.C. as the age of the Prophet, rests ultimately on the arbitrary identification of Hystaspas with Vistaspa.<sup>3</sup> Not that there are no other scholars, like Haug, Geldner,

1. Jackson—The Prophet of Ancient Iran—p. 118.

2. Browne—Literary History of Persia, Vol 1, P. 30.

3. Rezvi—Pasis, A People of the Book, p. 144

Geiger and Keith who claim great antiquity for Atharvan Zarathustra,<sup>1</sup> but Browne has lumped them all together and rejected them all on the ground that they are misguided by race prejudice. They were out to establish the superiority of the Aryans at the cost of the Semitics.<sup>2</sup>

But Browne forgets that race prejudice is a double-edged sword. Just as it may lead some few to claim a false antiquity for Zarathustra, it may lead some others to deny the true antiquity.

Let us try to have a peep into the mind of Dr. Browne. About the relative worth of the Avesta and the Koran he remarks : "My appreciation of the Quran grows the more I study it and endeavour to grasp its spirit ; the study of Avesta, save for philological, mythological or other comparative purposes leads only to a growing weariness and satiety."<sup>3</sup>

There will be many men who will find it a bit difficult to fall in line with Dr. Browne. Schopenhauer for instance says about the Koran : "we find in it the saddest and the poorest form of theism" ( The World as Will and Idea. Vol II. p. 361 ) and about the Gatha, Moulton remarks : "The prophet was in deadly earnest and he preached on great themes and spiritual fervour can make literature *malgre lui* even under unfavourable circumstances" ( Early Religious Poetry of Persia, p. 84 ), The poetry of the Gatha is certainly very sublime. A hymn like Sukta 44 of the Gatha does not suffer in comparison with the poetry of any religion or any language. Yet that does not suit the taste of Dr. Browne. One would be glad to be assured that Dr. Browne is free from all taint of race-prejudice.

Let us therefore throw away this double-edged sword in deciding the issue and look at the matter with the eye of the plain man, not over-burdened with an extra dose of academic erudition.

1. Pour-i-Davoud—Translation of the Gatha, Preface, p. 15.

2. Browne—Literary History of Persia, Vol 1, p. 29.

3. Browne—Literary History of Persia, Vol 1. p. 102.

- The broad fact remains that the Veda and the Avesta are very intimately related to each other. The affinity of the oldest form of the Avesta language with the Vedas, is so great in syntax, vocabulary, diction, metre and poetic style, that by the mere application of the phonetic law, whole Avesta stanzas may be translated word for word in Vedic, so as to produce verses, correct not only in form but in poetic spirit as well.<sup>1</sup>

"The coincidence between the Avesta and Rigveda is so striking as to indicate that the two languages cannot have been long separated before they arrived at their present condition"<sup>2</sup>. The affinity between them is so great that each of them has been said to be "a commentary on the other"<sup>3</sup>.

Thus the age of the Avesta cannot be dragged down, without at the same time dragging down the age of the Veda. If Avesta was composed in 1000 B.C, the Rigveda also must have been composed about that time. Such an idea is so grotesque that no one would like to make himself ridiculous by propounding such a theory at this hour of the day. Ages must have elapsed before the language of the Rigveda passed through the stages of Brahmana, Aranyaka, Upanisad, Sutra, and Mahabharata and turned into the vernacular of Gautama Buddha in the sixth century B.C. To compress these ages into four hundred years ( 1000—600 B.C. ) is beyond the capacity of even Aladdin's djinni, not to speak of an Iranologist.

Let us therefore dismiss unceremoniously the myth that the Gatha was composed about 1000 B.C. Tilak, the greatest of the Vedic scholars, has proved by astronomical data, that composition of the Rigveda started at about five thousand B.C.<sup>4</sup>

The mathematician scholar bases his conclusion on certain passages of the Yajurveda. According to him, these passages

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1. Macdonell—Vedic Mythology, p. 7
  2. Cambridge History of India—Vol I, p. 113
  3. Griswold—Religion of the Rigveda, p. 20
  4. Tilak—Orion, p. 206

relate to the period when the vernal equinox coincided with the asterism Krittika.

Tilak divides the Vedic age into four distinct periods.

1. 6000 B. C. to 4000 B. C.

This he calls Aditi or pre-Orion period. At this time the vernal equinox coincided with the asterism Punar-Vasu. This seems to be the traditional Satya Yuga.

2. 4000 B. C. to 2500 B. C.

This he calls the Orion period. In this period, the vernal equinox receded from Adra to Krittika. This seems to be the traditional Treta Yuga.

3. 2500 B. C. to 1400 B. C.

In this period the vernal equinox coincided with the Krittika. This seems to be the traditional Dwapara Yuga.

(This calculation agrees with the date of the Mahabharata war at about 1500 B. C., as fixed on other grounds, viz. the statement in the Puranas that 1377 years had passed between the birth of Parikshit and the coronation of Candra Gupta — vide Political History of Ancient India by Hem Chandra Ray Chaudhuri).

4. 1400 B. C. onwards

This period started when the vernal equinox shifted to asterism Aswini. This is the traditional Kali age. With Gautama Buddha (567 B.C.) we arrive at the historical age and the puranic nomenclature for the ages ceases.

The Gatha is contemporaneous with the later portions of the Rigveda, and may have been composed about 3500 B.C. (i.e. near about the commencement of the Treta age, which marks the advent of Parsu Rama)

Bhagawan Zarathustra, who had flourished in the Vedic period, is the first prophet of the Aryan race. The next prophet Bhagawan Ramacandra came down one thousand years later (about 2500 B.C.). The third prophet Sri Krisna came



down after another one thousand years i.e. about 1500 B.C. which is said to be the date of the Mahabharata war. Another one thousand years passed and Gautama Buddha made his appearance. With him the historic age starts. To seek to make Dharmaraja (Prophet) Zarathustra more or less a contemporary of Gautama Buddha is the height of frivolity. At least three milleniums, viz the age of the Upanisads (3500-2500 B.C.), the age of Ramayana (2500 to 1500 B.C.) and the age of the Mahabharata (1500—500 B. C.) intervened between Zarathustra and Gautama. The Gatha is one of the earliest Upanisads, embedded as it is, in the Samhita portion of the Veda (viz Bhargava Samhita) while the majority of the Upanisads form part of the Brahmana (Aranyaka) portion, which is later than the Samhitas.

The Gatha seems to have inspired the Swetaswatara Upanisad,—the Yellow Camel (Zarat Ustra) leading the White-Mule (Sweta Aswatara). Apart from the totemic nomenclature of both the prophets, monotheism and Bhakti which are the special message of the Gatha, form important lessons of the Swetaswatara Upanisad. In the whole Upanisadic literature, the word "Bhakti" is for the first time met with in the Swetaswatara, (6—23) and Swetaswatara announces monotheism in much more stronger terms than any other scripture has done—एको हि रुद्रो न द्वितीयाय तस्युः (3—2) Rudra is one and does not tolerate a second. The Swetaswatara is a very early Upanisad. The Gita borrows from the Swetaswatara सर्वतः पाणिषादं तत् (Sweta 3-13 and Gita 13—13), and Vadarayana in the Sutras श्रुतत्वाच्च (1-1-12) and चमसवद् अविशेषात् (1-4-8) presupposes the Swetaswatara. <sup>1</sup> The Gatha is therefore much anterior to the Gita.

Unfortunately the name 'Zarathustra' does not occur in the Veda. If it were there, that would have set at rest all controversy about the antiquity of the Holy Prophet. Yet

1. S. C. Sen—Mystic Philosophy of the Upanisads, p. 24

the absence of a direct mention of his name need not be considered fatal. There is enough circumstantial evidence in the Veda, which unmistakably points to the towering personality of the foremost Aryan prophet.

But before we go up to the Veda, let us peep into the Mahabharata. Jackson has taken the trouble to collect all the references that there are in the legends and myths of all the countries ranging from Armenia to Scandania, —all references in the Snorra Edda and the story of Semiramis—but he has very sadly neglected the tradition recorded in the great epic of India, the country that shared with Iran a joint civilisation and social life up to the period of the great Mahabharata war, about 1500 B. C.

In the Narayaniya section of the Santi parva ( chapters 334-340 of the Bangabasi edition and chapters 342-348 of the Kumbhakonam edition ) there is a very interesting story. Briefly stated it is this. In the province of Cedi ( Bactria ) there was a king named Vasu. He had an air-ship and could fly in the sky at his will and therefore he was known as Uparicara Vasu. Narayana gave him a scripture that was prompted by seven Citra Sikhandins ( hallowed beings=angels=Amesa Spentas ) <sup>1</sup>

The scripture was as good as the Veda ( 335-28, 40 ) being the storehouse of eternal laws ( 335-53 ). It was a new divine dispensation ( 335-25 ) and adorned with the grace of Om-kara ( Hun-Vara )—Chap 335-27.

Vasu performed a great sacrifice to the highest God, Harimedhas. A prominent feature of this sacrifice was that animal flesh was not offered as oblation न तत्र पशुघातो अभूत् ( 336-10 ).

We might remember in this connection that Mahabharata Zarathustra had condemned the oblation of flesh ( as

1. Chapter 335-27 ; 335-29 ; 336-3

used to be the custom in the time of Yama,—Gatha 32-7 ). He did away with such sacrifices and purified the rituals<sup>1</sup>.

Mahabharata tells us how Vasu was converted to this cult of nonviolent sacrifice. There was a conflict of opinion between the Saints and Deva-worshippers, whether meat could be offered as oblation. The Deva-Yasnists supported the oblation of flesh and the Saints ( Mazda-Yasnists ) opposed it. The matter was referred to king Vasu. Out of his partiality for Deva-worshippers, Vasu gave his decision in favour of the use of flesh. The Saints cursed him for his partisanship. Thereupon Vasu lost his power of flying in the sky. He soon repented and adopted the custom of five prayers a day ( 337-10 ) and regained his power. This apparently is the Indian version of the story of Vistaspa's conversion, as related in Chapter V of Jackson's 'Zoroaster, the Prophet of Ancient Iran.'

In this great sacrifice of King Vasu, Brihaspati, the priest of the Deva-worshippers was also present. He flew into a rage, stood up with the laddle in his hands and declared that he was not going to tolerate that an "unseen God" would take the libation.

अदृश्येन हृतो भागो देवेन हरिमेधसा ।

बृहस्पतिस् ततः क्रुद्धः स चम् उद्यम्य वेगितः ॥

Santi Parva, 336-13

Some other sages such as Ekata, Dwita, and Trita pacified Brihaspati by saying that such form of ( aniconic ) worship was very much current in Sweta dwipa, which lies north of mount Meru ( Elburz ) and near about the Kshiroda ( Caspian ) sea.

Narada became very inquisitive about this novel cult. He went up to Narayana himself. This Narayana was a great sage ( द्विपदाम् वरिष्ठम् greatest of the bipeds—335-1 ) and not

1. Dhalla—History of Zoroastrianism, p. 73

God Narayana. Narada learnt all the secrets of this new religion from Narayana :

नारदेन तु संप्राप्तः सरहस्यः ससंग्रहः ।

एषो धर्मः जगन्नाथात् साक्षान् नारायणान् नृपः ॥

Santi Parva, 346-10, 348-54.

This great apostle is designated as Narayana because he was a divine person. This brings to our mind the ideal of the नरोद्देश् नरः ( the Man-in-men ) of the Gatha ( 48-12 ), which connotes the same idea as Narayana.

This is the same ancient religion that God Hari Medhas Himself had previously taught to Brahma,

ततः ब्रह्मा नमश् चक्रे देवाय हरिमेधसे ।

धर्मं चाग्र्यं स जग्राह सरहस्य ससंग्रहम् ॥

Santi Parva 348— 30

We are reminded how Spitama Zarathustra taught the same religion that Ahura Mazda had taught in the House of Song ( Gatha 48-10 ).

Narada wanted to ascertain how this religion was being actually practised. He looked up further north-west ( आलोकयन् उत्तरपश्चिमेन 335-7 ) and came to live amongst these excellent devotees ( 336-29 ).

He found the religion to be a Satvata ( सात्वत ) religion ( 335-19, 24 ) i. e. a religion in which a Personal God is worshipped as the supporter of Satwa Guna ( Spenta Manyu ). It was a strictly monotheistic religion ( एकारन्तिन् 334-44, 336-30, 54 ). That it was aniconic, goes without saying ; for it was Brihaspati's protest against aniconism that drew Narada's attention to it. The devotees were very spiritual ( 335-13 ) and they used to offer prayers five times a day ( 335-25, 337-30 ). They were also accustomed to silent



prayers of Japa ( मानसो नाम स जपः —336-36 ), which reminds one of Vaj prayer. They were all equal (336-39) which means that there was no caste-distinction. The people had very white complexion and wore caps ( छत्राकृतिशीर्षा —335-11 ) Narada was glad to find these monotheistic people, accustomed to five prayers a day and devoted to Hari Medhas in thought, word and deed (Humata, Hukhta, Huvarshta) (336-46)

Narada became enamoured of these people, came back and recited their scripture before a large audience in the court of Brahma,

इदं महोपनिषदं चतुर्वेदसमनन्वितम् ।

सांख्य-योगकृतं तेन पंचरात्रानुशब्दितम् ॥

नारायणमुखोद्गीतम् नारदो अश्रावयत् पुनः ।

ब्रह्मणो सद्ने तात यथादृष्टं यथाश्रुतम् ॥

Santi Parva, 339-111/112

[ It is a great Upanisad, containing the summary of all the four Vedas and the gist of Samkhya and Yoga and known by the name of Panca-Ratra.]

Is not the above description a very faithful account of the ways of Mazda Yasna, as faithful as could be expected from a poet writing at a distant age and a distant country ?

I have put in detailed quotations, for if the points of resemblance are taken into consideration, the Narayaniya chapters alone would suffice to establish the antiquity of Maha Ratu Zarathustra and one need not have any hesitation in dismissing the unreliable traditions recorded by Arab historians.

it may be noted in this connection that the Narayaniya chapters of the Mahabharata ( which give an account of the worship of Hari Medhas ) have got unique importance. There is in them, the earliest mention of the Panca-ratra school, both Narada Sutra and Sandilya Sutra ( which are the standard



works on Bhakti Yoga ) being subsequent to the Mahabharata. Panca-ratra is the earliest sect of Bhakti Yoga, which subsequently became transformed into Vaisnavism when the cult of Vasudeva-Narayana, blended with that of Sri Krishna.<sup>1</sup> The Panca-ratra sect originally used to be considered as un-vedic, and the name Panca-ratra carries with it the memory of the five-times prayer of the Iranians. (Panca—five, रात्र=आरात्र—prayer). Thus it is not unreasonable to conclude that the earliest form of Vaisnavism is due to the inspiration of Maha Ratu Zarathustra, who is described in the Narayaniya chapters as sage Narayana ( as distinct from deity Narayana ). The word Narayana is cognate with नरोद्भू नरो of the Gatha ( Yas 48-10 ). It is to be remembered that the name Narayana does occur in the Veda.

Earlier scholars had said that the way of Bhakti was not so prominent in the age of the Upanisads, and that the Narayaniya chapters of the Mahabharata represent the attempt of Narada to import Bhakti from some western region outside of India. They thought that it was an attempt to import Christianity from Palestine<sup>2</sup>. They made a great mistake in thinking of Christianity instead of Mazda Yasna. No reason has been given as to why Narada ignored the claim of contiguous Iran and its homogeneous people and crossed over to distant Palestine. Then again there remains the important fact that the Mahabharata was written in an age (1000 B. C.) when Judaism had hardly even come into existence, not to speak of Christianity. Above all, the use of the word Hari Medhas as the name of the highest Deity of this religion is conclusive. Hari Medhas is nothing but the Sanskritisation of the name Ahura Mazda. By the time of the Mahabharata, the epithet Ahura (Asura) had, in India, come to be looked down upon as dishonourable, and the sage Vyasa did not like

1. Radhakrishnan—Indian Philosophy, vol. 1, p. 493

2. Seal—Vaisnavism and Christianity p. 30. Vide criticism by Dr. Radhakrishnan in Indian Philosophy, vol. p. 499

to use that word as the adjective of the highest Lord. He replaced it by "Hari" which very much resembled "Ahura" in sound, and at the same time was most honourable. That 'Mazda' and 'Medhas' are interchangeable ( ए of मेधा changes to इ and then to य, and then to ज् ) is apparent from the comparison of Sanskrit नेदिष्ठ (near-most) and Zend नज़दिस्त. When Hari Mazda is the name of the highest God, the religion cannot be anything else than Mazda-Yasna.

That Hari Medhas is a coined name—coined in imitation of Ahura Mazda—is apparent from the fact that in Sanskrit 'Hari' alone suffices to denote the highest Deity and apparently there is no reason for suffixing 'Medhas' to it. Such addition does not increase the denotation or the connotation of Hari. Hari Medhas is not an alternative name for any of the other Gods famous in Veda or Purana. He is therefore a new God imported from outside. This is why the name is not so familiar in Sanskrit. It is found five times in the Narayaniya chapters ( Mahabharata ), five times in the Bhagavata Purana and twice in the Vishnu Purana—nowhere else. Thus this one word Hari Medhas alone suffices to prove the antiquity of Atharvan Zarathustra. The Mahabharata says that the worship of Hari Medhas was prevalent in the Satya Yuga (348-34) which is long anterior to the age of Sri Krishna or Ramachandra. It may not be said that the Narayaniya chapters are a subsequent interpolation and not a part of the original Mahabharata. These chapters are mentioned in the list of contents, as noted in Parva Samgrahadhyaya (Chapter 2, Adiparva) of the Mahabharata.

Thus the Mahabharata alone suffices to silence the Arab traditionists. We would say that its testimony is conclusive for proving the antiquity of Maharatu Zarathustra.

According to the Mahabharata, the Avesta ( a new Veda, inspired by seven Citra-Sikhandins, i. e. seven Amesha Spentas ) was composed during the reign of King Vasu, (Santi Parva 335-27). And Vasu adopted the new Veda.

तस्य शिष्यो बभूवाग्र्यो राजोपरिचरः वसुः ।

अधीतवांस् तदा शास्त्रं सम्यक् चित्र-शिखण्डिजम् ॥

Santi Parva 336-3

This King had an air-ship (Santi Parva 337-9, 337-15). He became famous for it, and his usual designation came to be Uparicara Vasu (Vasu, the Sky-skipper)—Santi Parva 337-38. The province where he ruled is called Cedi<sup>1</sup>. In Cedi camels were numerous and King Kasu (probably the father of Vasu) had made a present of one hundred camels to sage Brahmatithi. (Rigveda, 8-5-37). Thus Cedi seems to be the Vedic name for Bactria, which is famous for its camels (and it may be that camels are responsible for the name 'Zarath-I-Istra,' as the cows are for the name 'Govinda'). According to the Iranian tradition (Din Kirt) King Vistaspa was the owner of a wonderful chariot that could fly in the air<sup>2</sup>. When the traditions of two countries unite in declaring the same remarkable feature of a pious King, viz his possession of an air-ship, there is little doubt that King Vasu of the Mahabharata, and King Vistaspa of the Avesta, are identical. The propinquity of Peshwar to Bactria (a distance of about four hundred kilometres) explains the currency of the same tradition in both countries.

This famous King Vasu lived in the beginning of the Treta age<sup>3</sup>. Thus he was considerably earlier to Ramachandra who lived at the end of the Treta age.

सन्धयंशे समनुप्राप्ते त्रेतायां द्वापरस्य च ।

अहं दाशरथिः गमो भविष्यामि जगत् पतिः ॥

Mahabharata—Santi Parva 339-84

Prophet Parsu Rama had flourished in the beginning of the Treta age.

1. Pradhana—Chronology of Ancient India, p. 62

2. Jackson—The Prophet of Ancient Iran, p. 135

3. Pargiter—Ancient Indian Historical Traditions, p. 316





त्रेताद्वापरयोः सन्धौ रामः शस्त्रभृतां वरः ।

असकृत् पार्थिवं क्षत्रः जघानामर्षचोदितः ॥

Mahabharata-Adiparva (Parva Sangrahadhyaya) 2-3

Thus Parsu Rama and Vasu were contemporary. This well accords with the fact that Zarathustra and Vistaspa were contemporary. The traditional Indian pair might be the replica of the historical Iranian pair (the Prophet and a Prince).

As regards the Muslim traditionists, one would be well advised not to place too much reliance on their testimony. They were so ill-informed that the whole of the Achamanian period of the Iranian history has been by-passed by them. They make no mention of the most illustrious emperors of Iran, like Darius and Xerxes <sup>1</sup> who had led expeditions to Greece. If they make such a serious mistake in respect of a period that separates them by only fifteen hundred years ( 600 B. C.—900 A. D. ) what mistake would they not commit about a Prophet who had flourished more than four thousand years before their time ( 3500 B. C.—900 A. D. )

Let us however go to earlier literature, to Rigveda itself, and see if there is any reference to the Holy Prophet in that great book.

As already noted, the name of Maha-Ratu Zarathustra does not occur in the Rigveda. But there is reason to think that he has been mentioned there by other designations. For instance take the lines.

यज्ञैर् अथर्वा प्रथमः पथस् तते ।

ततः सूर्यः व्रतपा वेन आजनि ॥

Rigvedal—1-83-5

[Atharvan first chalked out the way of worship, and then came the vow-keeper Prophet (Vena) of the solar race.]

1. Dhalla—Zoroastrian Theology, p. 334

It is probable that the two prophets, Zarathushtra and Ramachandra have been mentioned here.

Zarathustra has been described in the Avesta as "the Athravan" par excellence.

उश्ता नो ज्ञातो आध्रव यो स्पितामो ज़रथुश्त्रो

Farvardin Yast 94

[ Fortunate are we that Spitama Zarathushtra, the Athravan, has been born. ]

While the Rigveda describes the Bhrigus as Atharvan

अथर्वाणो भृगवः सोम्यासः

Rig 10-14-6

[Soma-drinking Bhrigus are Atharvans] And the Culika Upanisad (10) says that Atharvan denotes the elders of the Bhrigus अथर्वाणो भृगूत्माः <sup>1</sup>

Thus the term "Atharva" very probably refers to Zarathustra.

Similarly Ramachandra was very famous as "the keeper of the vow" (his promise of abdicating the throne in favour of Bharata) and he came of the solar clan. Thus very probably "Vena" refers to Ramachandra.

It may not be said that the mention of Zarathustra and Ramachandra in the Rigveda is anachronistic. For the compilation of the Rigveda continued through several centuries. The Rigveda itself speaks of the earlier, the middle and the later hymns यः स्तोमेभिर् वावृधे पूर्वेभिर् यो मध्यमेभिर् उत नूतनेभिः (3 32-13.) The earliest portions of the Rigveda were composed in the Satya Yuga (before 3500 B.C.) and the latest portions by the end of Treta (2500 B.C.). This is supported by the tradition that the Veda had been divided in three books (Rik, Yajus and Saman) by the end of Treta Yuga<sup>1</sup>.

1. (i) Vishnu Purana, 3-2

(ii) Pargiter—Ancient Indian Historical Traditions, p. 315

Mention by the terms 'Atharvan' and 'Vena' may however be considered rather too wide. Let us therefore turn to another passage where the allusion is more definite.

अपाप शकस् ततनुष्टिम् ऊहति

तनुष्टुभ्रम् मघवा यः कवासखः ॥ Rigveda 5-34-3

[ Sakra ( Indra ) overthrew that fair-complexioned rebel (ततनुष्टि), who was the head of the Magha, and a friend of Kava.]

Tatanushti has been explained by Sayana as the destroyer (नुष्टि) of the existing order (तत).

Zarathustra has been called here a rebel, for he rose in rebellion against the Deva Yasna cult (of which Indra is the presiding Deity). Zarathustra is qualified by the three adjectives तनुष्टुभ्र, मघवा and कवासख. All the three attributes are characteristic of the Holy Prophet. He was very fair-complexioned ( तनुष्टुभ्र ). This is why he is called Spitama ( whitest ) in the Avesta. The church that he founded was named by him as Magha (मज्रोइ मगाइ Sukta 29-11 ). Thus he is described as the head of the Magha ( मघवा ) and he was the friend of Kava Vistaspa ( कवा वीस्तास्यो Sukta 51-16 ) and he is thus stated to be कवासख.

If these lines of the Rigveda have any historical significance, they certainly refer to Maha Ratu Zarathustra and to nobody else. For we know of no other person to whom all the three adjectives apply. Take another passage

प्र तद् दुःशीमे पृथवाने वेने ।

प्र रामे वोचम् असुरे मघवत्सु ॥ Rigveda (10-93-14)

[ I would now speak of Rama, the incomparable seer of Parthia, and also about Asura ( Ahura ) and the Maghavats ( Magis ) ]

Evidently 'Rama' here refers to Parsu-Rama ( the Rama of Persia=Zarathustra ) for Raghu Rama ( the Indian Rama ) had very little concern with Ahura or Magians. The qualification 'Parthian ( Prithavana ) Seer [Vena]' makes

the inference almost certain. The same Rama is referred to in Aitareya Brahman (7-2) as "Rama Margaveya" i. e. Rama of Margu or Merv, who conferred on the Syaparnas, the right to participate in the sacrifice of Viswantara. Both Prithu and Margu lie outside India.

The original designation of Parsu Rama had been simply Rama and it is by this name that he is very often described in the Mahabharata and the Puranas. But when another prophet came up bearing the same name, probably so named in remembrance of the glory of his illustrious predecessor, it became necessary to distinguish the one from the other and the former was called Parsu Rama, and the latter Raghu Rama. That Rama was an honourable term even in Iran, is evident from Rama being the name of a Yazata (vide Rama Yasht.)

Parsu is the vedic name for Persia. The Iranians, in the Bihistan inscription, name the country as Parsa (Hodivala—Parsis of Ancient India—p. 3). Zarathustra was designated Parsu Rama because he belonged to the land of Persia. Subsequently Parsu (which also means a hatchet) was utilised to express the austere severity of the prophet against polytheism and idolatry. There is also the tradition that Maha Ratu Zarathustra used to carry in his hands the Asa staff of nine knots,<sup>1</sup> as symbolic of his strict adherence to the rules of Asa (rectitude). In India the Asa staff was converted into a hatchet. The Skanda Purana relates the story reversely and says that the hatchet was converted into a staff. As the hatchet brings up association of violent wrath, it was changed into staff. This was done at Hatakeswar (Herat ?)

तेषां तद्वचनं श्रुत्वा गमः शम्भुतां वरः ।

चक्रं लोहमय्याम् यष्टिम् तं भक्त्या स कुठारकम् ॥

Skanda Purana —Nagara Khanda (6)-94-18



In the above quoted passage of the Rigveda, the reference to Zarathustra is made not by his Iranian name, but by his Indian designation. Yet the association of Ahura and Maghavat points to the identity.

To some people the identification may appear to be a mere conjecture. Let us therefore look up if there is any firmer ground to take our stand on. The history of the two words "Deva" and "Asura" seems to provide such a ground. Herein there is unmistakable reference to the Reformation of Maha Ratu Zarathustra, even without a direct mention of his name.

When the Aryas (Indo-Iranians) were living together, both the words Deva and Asura were terms of respect. Thus we find that in the older portion of the Rigveda, all the prominent gods, such as Varuna, Rudra, Agni and even Indra, have been described as Asura,<sup>1</sup> which leaves no doubt that Asura had once been a term of respect even to Vedic people. That Deva had been an honourable term for the Avestic people is evident from *दिव्यिताना* (divine—Sukta 48—1), *देवांज्जहा* (having divine lustre—Sukta 47-6) and *देवाञ्जयति* (exalts—Sukta 44-6).

Subsequently both the words became degraded in meaning. To the Vedic people, Asura now means a demon, and to the Avestic people, Deva (Div) means a demon. In former days the term for denoting a demon was 'Danava' in both the communities<sup>2</sup>.

Both the meanings of Deva (honourable and dishonourable) persist to this day even in the European languages. Thus (i) divine and (ii) deity on the one hand, and (i) devil, (ii) deuce and (iii) diabolical on the other, are reminiscent of the original noble connotation and its subsequent fall.

But what could be the reason for this subsequent degradation? If it were the result of a natural degradation,

1. Haug—Essays on the Parsis, p. 279

2. Haug—Essays on the Parsis, p. 279

the degraded meanings also were likely to have been more or less similar in both the communities. But the fact that these two once honourable words acquire an exactly opposite sense in each community, suggests a wilful degradation. In other words, the attribution of an opposite sense by each community, seems to be the result of a rivalry that grew up between them.

The difference seems to have started over the use of the icon in worship. For whatever may have been the original derivative meaning of 'Deva' and 'Asura,' in popular usage, Deva came to mean a visible God ( God represented by an idol ) and Asura, an invisible ( formless ) God. Some people preferred the use of an icon ; this was Deva-Yasna. Others interdicted its use. Their cult was known as Ahura tkesa in the beginning and Mazda-Yasna later on. Polytheism and caste-distinction were the other two concomitant features of Deva-Yasna, while Monotheism and caste-equality were the other features of Mazda-Yasna. But the use or the disuse of the icon is the custom that is responsible for their different nomenclature.

Brihaspati was the leader of Deva-worshippers. We have seen how enraged he was when king Vasu offered oblation to aniconic Hari Medhas. Bhrigu or Sukra was the leader of the Asura-worshippers. He was so much intolerant of idolatry that he is said to have dealt a kick on the breast of Vishnu

तम् दृष्ट्वा मुनिशार्दूलः भृगुः क्रोपसमन्वितः ।  
सर्व्यं पादं विचिक्षेप विष्णोर् बर्क्षसि शोभने ॥

Padma Purana—Uttara Khanda 255-48

[ On seeing Vishnu, the great Muni Bhrigu became highly enraged and kicked on the breast of Vishnu with his left foot. ]

291

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It is evident that Vishnu must have had a body in order to have a breast and that the attribution of a body was the cause of the annoyance of Bhrigu.

The attitude of Brihaspati and Bhrigu points out the difference in the outlook of the two communities and also throws light on the accepted significance of Deva and Asura, irrespective of the original meaning of the two words. It was not however a question of the individual tastes of Brihaspati and Bhrigu. They acted as the representatives of two different ideologies—the Deva and the Asura cults.

The following verse of the Yajur Veda leaves no doubt that the term Asura subsequently came to mean aniconic or formless. The Rishi here denounces the aniconic form of worship and solicits Agni to drive out the aniconic Gods.

ये रुपाणि प्रतिमुञ्चमाना,  
असुराः संतः स्वधया चरन्ति ।  
परा पुरो निपुरो ये भरन्ति,  
अग्निस् तान् लोकात् प्रणुदाति अस्मात् ॥

Yajus 2-80

[Those, who casting off their forms, *have become Asuras* and now move about as spirits, to the front, to the back and on all sides, may Agni drive them away from this place.]

We know from Avestic traditions that it was Maha Ratu Zarathustra who uttered the first word of protest against the Deva Yasna cult<sup>1</sup>, and that the Gods used to move about in human form before the advent of Zarathustra. Yasna (9—15). This is supported by the Indian tradition that the adventures of Parsu Rama is the basis of the Deva-sura war.<sup>2</sup> It can therefore be safely inferred that the reformation of Spitama Zarathustra is responsible for causing the degradation in the meaning of the word Asura in the Rigveda. Thus

1. Fravardin Yast—93

2. Pargiter—Ancient Indian Historical Tradition,—p. 68

the Rigveda bears testimony to the great change effected by the movement of Zarathustra. It is idle to deny that he is a contemporary of the Rigveda, simply because he is not mentioned there by his Iranic name.

The Deva-sura war, the clash between the ideals of iconic and aniconic worship, is of vital importance to the Indo-Iranian race. Its importance in the religious world is unique. For it not only affected Hinduism and Parsi-ism, the two oldest religions of the world, it fashioned to a large extent the three Semitic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam too, so far as their ideal of monotheism and iconoclasm is concerned. The Old Testament is the basic scripture of all these three religions and its compilation was completed by prophets like Ezra and Nehemiah only in 450 B. C. <sup>1</sup> The Jews came in close contact with Mazda Yasna, during their exile in Babylon, and learnt the lessons of monotheism and iconoclasm therefrom and introduced them in the Bible.<sup>2</sup> We should not therefore rest content with merely the degradation of the meanings of Deva and Asura, but try to find out if any other relevant facts about this movement can be gathered from the Rigveda. Fortunately the whole history of the Indo-Iranian dispute can be traced from the Rigveda. In the matter of reconstructing this story, it is however very necessary to remember these two points :

(1) Firstly, that when Atharvan Zarathustra made his appearance, Deva Yasna had already been in existence.

He saw that the icon was being used by some people in the worship of God (Sukta 48-10). He saw that the caste system was current (Sukta 33-3). He calls these people by the name Devacina (Sukta 30-6). He was acquainted with the story of the slaughter of Vritra (Sukta 44-16). All these facts point to the prevalence of the Deva Yasna cult.

1. Gangapasad—Fountainhead of Religions, p. 43

2. Macdonell—Comparative Religion, p. 128



This would silence scholars like Khabardar who claim a pre-vedic age for Maha Ratu Zarathustra.

(2) Secondly, that Ahura-tkesa (also called Paourya-tkesa) had been the original creed of the Indo-Iranians<sup>1</sup>, and that Deva-Yasna was an innovation, against which Zarathustra raised his voice of protest.

This would appear from the fact that in the Mahabharata, the Asuras are said to be the Elder Brothers, and the Devas, the Younger Brothers असुराः भ्रातरो ज्येष्ठाः देवाश्चापि यवीयसः (Santi Parva 33-25). The Amara Kosha also says that the Asuras were the previous Gods. शुक्रशिष्या दिनिसुताः पूर्वदेवाः सुरद्विषः । The Brihad-Aranyaka Upanishad also says कनीयसा एव देवा ज्यायसा असुराः (3-1). These only repeat the statement of a rishi of the Rigveda that the Asuras have now lost their power and it is now the regime of Devas निर्माया उ त्ये असुरा अभुवन् (10-124-5) and that Indra (the God of the Devas) has now ousted the older God Varuna (10-125 4).

This would silence scholars like Spiegel who would attribute all that is good in the Avesta to Semitic sources<sup>2</sup>. For not only is Zarathushtra earlier than the Semitic prophets, but there was still an earlier pure religion. Viz. Paurya tkesa (Old Religion) which was the common religion of the Iranians and the Indians. Therein Varuna was the God worshipped, and Varuna is per excellence the upholder of moral order. This bespeaks that religion was a very pure religion. The movement of Zarathushtra was an attempt to Reformation<sup>3</sup> and this Reformation divided the Aryans into two camps, (being a protest against the innovation of the Angirases) These cults were called Mazda-Yasna and Deva-Yasna in the Upastha, and Pitri Yana and Deva Yana in the

1. (i) Haug—Essays on the Religion of the Parsis, p. 259

(ii) Taraporevala—Religion of Zarathustra, p. 3

2. Browne—Literary History of Persia, Vol 1, p. 36

3. Cambridge History of India—Vol 1, P. 76



Veda. To Mazda-Yasna, the name of Pitri Yana was given in the Veda, for largely speaking, Mazda Yasna reverted to the ancient faith, while Deva-Yana had been an innovation. The Asuras became the opponents of the Devas. The Rigveda says that the Asuras are they who are not Devas अनायुधासः असुराः अदेवाः ( 8-96 9 ) and the Vendidad ( 18-62 ) gives to Mazda-Yasna the name of अदेवयज्ञः ।<sup>1</sup>

There is a marked contrast between Varuna and Indra, the two main Gods of the Vedic period. Varuna is famous for upholding the moral order, and Indra is famous for his physical powers. Varuna is the least anthropomorphic of the Vedic Gods and Indra is the most anthropomorphic.<sup>2</sup> The Rigveda also noted the contrast.

वृत्राणि अन्यः समिथेषु जिघ्नते ।  
व्रताणि अन्यः अभिरक्षते सदा

Rigveda 7-83-9

[Indra protects from the external foe and Varuna upholds the moral order.]

Maha Ratu Zarathustra had realised the supreme need of moral character. Asa ( Rectitude ) forms the very basis of the religion that he established and he naturally affiliated himself to Varuna.

Varuna is the more ancient God. He is not only Indo-Iranian, he is an Indo-European God. The Greeks worshipped him under the name of Ouranos<sup>3</sup> and considered him to be ancestor of Zeus.<sup>4</sup>

In the Veda too, Asura Varuna has often been called "the Father"

1. Hodivala—Zarathustra and his Contemporaries in the Rigveda p. 2

2. Macdonell—Vedic Mythology, p. 24

3. Macdonell—Vedic Mythology, p. 34

4. Macdonell—Vedic Mythology, p. 36

अपोनिषिञ्चन् असुरः पिता नः,  
 क्षसन्तु गर्गरा अपां वरुण ।  
 अवनीचीर् अप सृज वदन्तु,  
 पृश्नि-वाहवो मण्डुका इरिणान् ॥

### Angirasa Veda 4-15-12

[May Asura Varuna, our Father, pour down water. Let shaven sages (मण्डुक) of the land of Iran, with the Prisni in their hands, hail the downpour.]

Thus Mazda-Yasna, which very much resembled the old Varuna cult was called पितृयान (the way of the Forefathers) in India.

This is about the designation of the two cults. Let us see what the Veda says about their characteristic features.

A Deva-Yanist cries out

परं मृत्योः अनुपरेहि पन्थाम्, यस् ते स्व इतरो देवयानात् ।  
 चक्षुष्मते शृण्वते ते ब्रवीमि, मा नः प्रजां रीरिषो मोत वीरान् ॥

### Rigveda 10-18-1

[Let the other cult ( Pitri-Yana ) the cult other than Deva-Yana, go to ruins. We would worship the God "who has eyes and ears"]

While the Pitri Yana is described as follows :

यं त्वा द्यावापृथिवी यं त्वा आपः, त्वष्टा यं त्वा सुजनिमा जजान ।  
 पन्थाम् अनु प्रविद्वान् पितृयानम्, यमुमद् अग्ने समिधानो विभाहि ॥

### Rigveda 10-2-7

[May Agni ( born of heaven, earth and water, and kindled by Twasta ) shine brightly in the Pitri-Yana cult.]

It is thus clear that the Pitri-Yanists offered worship before the altar of fire. They did not feel the need for a god with eyes and ears.

The use of the icon seems to be the main factor that accentuated the difference between the two communities. In any case this practice is responsible for their different designation.

Though a particular rishi decried the Pitri Yana cult and wanted it to go to ruins, that does not seem to have been the general attitude. Only the Indra worshippers felt some sort of animosity towards the Pitri-Yana. The majority of the people appreciated the underlying truth of both the cults. They thought that each was complementary to the other, and that in between them, the Iranian and the Indian religions comprehended all possible modes and provided for all possible varieties of worship.

द्वे सन्ती अश्रृणवम् पितृणाम्, अहं देवानां उत मर्त्यानाम् ।

ताभ्याम् इदं विश्वं णजत समेति, यद् अन्तरा पितरं मातरं च ॥

Rigveda 10-88-15

[I have heard of both the ways—the way of the Pitri people, and the way of the Deva people. All the world proceeds by the one or the other of these two. There is no more difference between them than between a father and a mother ]

All the same, there was a clash of ideals. The other cult has its part to play, but both of them cannot be practised at one and the same time. There can be no compromise between Monotheism and Henotheism, between Iconism and Aniconism, between caste-equality and caste-division. This is the truth that Maha Ratu Zarathustra emphasised, and which his followers forget, when they try to reinstate polytheism under the veil of doing honour to the yazatas.

Maha Ratu Zarathushtra turned back to Varuna. This was a monotheistic cult—for Asura Varuna is the sovereign of the universe, and there is none to question his sovereignty.



अस्तम्नाद् याम् असुरो विश्ववेदाः, अमिमीत वरिमाणं पृथिव्याः ।  
आसीद् विश्वा भुवनानि सम्राट्, विश्वेत् तानि वरुणस्य व्रतानि ॥

Rigveda 8-42-1

[All wise Asura Varuna created the heaven and the earth, and is the sovereign of the Universe. This is His feat ]

Deluded are the scholars who tell us that the Aryas worshipped the created (Nature's objects), and not the Creator.

It is generally assumed that all religions are polytheistic to start with, and become monotheistic with the progress of thought. But the reverse is the truth. All religions are monotheistic in the beginning.<sup>1</sup> New Gods are added mostly on political grounds, such as the combination of two races into one.<sup>2</sup> Jehovah was the God of the Israelites. When they conquered Canaan, the Canaanite God Baal also came to be worshipped along with Jehovah.<sup>3</sup> Allah is the God of the Muslims. When the Jews of Medina were subjugated, Hazrat Muhammad permitted the use of Rahman ( the name used by Jews ) along with Allah ( Koran 17-110).<sup>4</sup> Fortunately this did not develop into polytheism, but the possibility was there.

Apart from the combination of the Gods of two people, another potent cause of the growth of polytheism is the application of more than one name to the same God. Originally this is done to lay emphasis on the different aspects of the same God—as "Rahman" lays emphasis on the kindliness of Allah. In the Vedic religion, the same God was called Varuna

1. Windle—Religions of Past and Present, p. 205

2. Widgery—Comparative Study of Religion, p. 84

3. Macdonell—Comparative Religion. p. 121

4. Sell—The Historical Development of Koran, p. 56

when emphasis was laid on his moral character, and he was called Indra, when emphasis was meant on his physical prowess. As a matter of fact the polytheism of the Veda grew mainly out of this cause. When any particular aspect was desired to be emphasised, the same Being was given a different name such as Agni, Yama, or Matariswan. This is the unambiguous assertion of the Rigveda.

एकं सत् बिप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति ।

अग्निम् यमं मातरिश्वानम् आहुः ॥ Rigveda 1-164-46

This is how Max Muller says that the so called polytheism of the Veda is not real polytheism ; it is really henotheism,<sup>1</sup> i.e. polytheism in appearance but monotheism in reality<sup>2</sup>. But the wall is a very thin one, and henotheism soon passes into polytheism. The process starts with joint-responsibility (as in the case of two Aswins, who are one-in-two, there being no separate function for each), and develops into equal responsibility (as in the case of Indra and Varuna, who are considered to be two-in-one, two friends, complementary to each other). The next step is the implication of one friend by the other. When Varuna is worshipped, his Friend, मित्र, Indra also is supposed to be worshipped by implication, and when Indra is worshipped, his friend Varuna is supposed to have been worshipped by implication.

The tendency is so contagious, that at a subsequent period it spread over even to Iran, the land of strict monotheism, and Mithra began to be worshipped along with Mazda.<sup>3</sup> Mithraism was carried over to Rome, by the Roman soldiers, who came to fight against the Sassanian monarchs. The Romans had become worshippers of Mithra, before they took to Christianity

1. Macdonell—Sanskrit Literature p. 71

2. Macdonell—Vedic Mythology p. 16

3. Macdonell—Vedic Mythology p. 127



and Christmas day (wrongly supposed to be the birthday of Jesus Christ) is reminiscent of Mithra worship.<sup>1</sup>

It would thus appear that the process generally starts with laying emphasis on the two aspect of the same God, but when the two are joined together, and worshiped as a pair of Gods, their unity has been entirely lost. Monotheism has come to an end, and polytheism has started its course.

Maha Ratu Zarathustra appeared on the scene just at the time when Varuna and Indra began to be worshipped as a pair of Gods, which is far from being the case of different emphasis laid on the different aspect of the same God. The god is no longer one, but they are two. Zarathustra thought that the limit has been reached and the game must be stopped. For once the play of adding gods to God makes its start, there is no knowing where it will end. It has reached in India the number of 330 millions, i.e. one God for each inhabitant of India. Religion is said to be the bond of unity between the individuals and the nation. If religion provides one separate God for each individual, that would be ideal unity indeed !

So Maha Ratu Zarathustra started the proposition that as God is one, He should be called by one and one name only, viz Mazda (1) ये आन्मेनी मज़्दाओ सखावी अहुरो (Sukta 45-10)

Who is known by the name "Ahura Mazda"

(2) मज़्दाओ सखारे मइरिस्तो Sukta 29-4  
Mazda alone is adorable-most

[ सखारः = सस्वरः—one who goes by himself, singular, unique. It comes from the root स्वृ-स्वरति—to go ; Nighatnu 2-14-54.

The cognate word in Veda is सस्वर्ता. Cf. यत् सस्वर्ता जिहीलरे, यद् आविः (Rigveda 7-54-5)—what the Unique One conceals, or what is manifest.

1. Dhalla—History of Zoroastrianism p. 307



स्वृ + तृच् = स्वर्ता ; स्वृ + अल् = स्वरः ; सखार becomes सखारे by substituting ए in place of सु, by the rule सुप्-सुलुक् 7-1-39 ]

It may be noted that Maharatu Zarathustra was more careful in this matter than Hazrat Muhammad. Zarathustra stuck to one and one name alone, Muhammad had permitted the use of two names, Allah and Rahman. (Koran 17-110) <sup>1</sup>

Zarathushtra took up the task of "deepening the meaning of religion". He was pained to find that morality (Purity of Character), which is the first requisite of the religious life, had become so much dissociated from religion, that no compunction was felt, in calling the most depraved man, as "the favourite of God" (Yas 32 4). Such callousness strikes at the very root of religion. At a subsequent age, such frivolity exasperated Gautama Budha so much, that he identified morality with religion, and assigned to belief in God, secondary importance. This however was an error on the other extreme. Morality and God cannot be detached from each other. "Ethics on the one hand, remains incomplete, inadequate and unexplained, unless it can carry itself up to religion, while on the other hand no religion can be true religion, unless God speaks in it to the conscience of man."<sup>2</sup>

Zarathustra proceeded on the right lines, he made rectitude the basis of religion.

[ The Gayatri of the Parsi beautifully expresses the close association of God and Morality. 'Asat Cit ha Ca' may mean both (1) on account of Rectitude, and (2) by means of Rectitude. Mazda (and his Ratu too) is to be worshipped (i) on account of Rectitude i. e. because he has got supreme excellence and that excellence consists in His being the upholder of the moral order, or (ii) by means of Rectitude, for to Mazda, moral character is more pleasing than anything else. ]

1. Rodwell—Koran p. 173 (foot note)

2. Wheeler—Elementary Course of Ethics, p. 13



Thus while Varuna was losing ground in India, Zarathushtra was developing the figure of Ahura Mazda, and depriving him of a rival, by degrading Indra, his most serious competitor as the God of war, to the rank of a demon.<sup>1</sup> It required a good deal of courage to abjure a pre-eminent god like Indra, who had thrown in the background all other ancient Gods, as the Rigveda states.

देवाश् चितते असुर्याय पूर्वे, अनुक्षत्राय ममिरे सहांसि ।  
इन्द्रो मघानि दयते विषह्य, इन्द्रं वाजस्य जोहुवन्त सातौ ॥

Rigveda 7-21-7

[ All the ancient Gods, O Indra, submitted their powers to your lordly dominion (असुर्याय क्षत्राय). It is out of his kindness ( i.e. for their own benefit ) that Indra subdues the Maghas. People call out to the Indra for acquisition of strength.]

Indra was so important that out of the one thousand hymns of the Rigveda, 250 hymns are addressed to Indra while for Varuna there are onlo 12 hymns, for Vishnu 5 and for Rudra 3. The opposition that the repudiation of Indra was likely to stir up was appalling, but Zarathustra's courage was equal to the occasion. Other features associated with the Indra cult, such as iconism and caste-distinction, also seemed to Zarathustra to be very baneful for the community, and Maha Ratu Zarathustra decided that for the good of the nation, Indra must go.<sup>2</sup> That was a momentous decision—a decision that has affected the history of mankind for ever. Mankind heard for the first time, a definite, decided, resolute proclamation of monotheism from the foremost prophet of the Indo-Iranians. It has been and is still being echoed in different climes.

1. Keith—Religion and Philosophy of Veda and Upanishads p. 468

2. It may be noted in this connection that Govinda (Krishna) also had prohibitted the worship of Indra (vide the story of the lift of Govardhana hills). But his motive was different Viz. the supersession of the god of Power (Indra) by the God of Love (Vishnu)

Maha Ratu Zarathustra asserted monotheism, not by words alone. He established the Magha Church for the confirmation and propagation of monotheism. It was a bold challenge thrown to the existing society.

Indra-worshippers also were not going to take the matter lying down. They organised themselves into a distinct group determined to obstruct the spread of Mazda-Yasna at all cost. The Indo-Iranians became divided into two groups on the method of worship—the aniconic protestants, and the iconic catholics, so to say.

It is however to be noted that Zarathustra did not wish to set up an altogether strange order of things. His protest was directed against the innovations of the Indra-cultists and he wanted to go back to the pure ancestral religion.

Yet it is not exactly the same old religion that he established. Zarathushtra had become very suspicious about the advisability of retaining the name 'Varuna'. There was some weakness inherent in the Varuna cult, that afforded the opportunity for the growth of the Indra cult, as its offshoot. Zarathushtra would not tolerate such a loop-hole to remain any longer. Varuna had been described as the friend of Indra.

अनु य षु वरुणः इन्द्र-सखा

Rigveda 7-34-24

[Varuna is the friend of Indra in the heavens]

The association of the two names Indra and Varuna, as two equal co-partners, was much too vivid in the minds of men, so that one name was likely to call up the memory of the other. Zarathustra did not like to encourage this imperceptible re-entry of Indra. He decided to adopt another name for the God of the new cult—a name which could invariably be qualified by the adjective Asura (an-iconic) He selected the name 'Vedhas' (Mazda).



Vedhas was not a new coinage. Rudra had been called वेधस् ।

अषाढाय सहमानाय वेधसे Rigveda 7-46-1

Mitra has been called Vedhas :

राजा सुक्षत्रो अजनिष्ट वेधाः । Rigveda 3-59-4

Agni has been called Vedhas :

कीलालपे सोमपृष्ठाय वेधसे । Rigveda 10-9-41

And Soma has been called Vedhas :

प्र पूनानाय वेधसे सोमाय वच उद्धतम् । Rigveda 9-103-1

As a matter of fact the name Vedhas, when used in association with Asura, referred to the Highest Lord

पतंगम् अक्तं असुरस्य मायया, हृदा पश्यन्ति मनसा विपदिचतः ।

समुद्रे अन्तः कवयो विचक्षते, मरीचीनाम् पदम् इच्छन्ति वेधसः ॥

Rigveda 10-117-1

[ Through the grace of the Asura, the sages see clearly within themselves the up-growing soul (पतंग). Their sight can pierce the depth of the sea. They desire from Vedhas, the status of the saints (मरीची). ]

Agni is said to be the special messenger of Vedhas.

त्वाम् इद् अत्र वृणते त्वायवो, होतारं अग्ने विदथेषु वेधसः ।

Rigveda 10-91-9

[ In this assembly, O Agni the people elect you alone to be the priest of Vedhas.]

This hymn was sung in इलस् पद् i.e. the land of Iran, (as the first verse of the hymn announces—दमे दमुना इषयन् इलस्पदे 10-91-1 )

Thus the name Vedhas was quite familiar in Iran.

So 'Vedhas' became the new God. The form वेधा (ending in आ instead of अस्) was also in use.

जज्ञानं सप्तमातरः वेधाम् अशासत श्रिये

Rig. 9-102-4

[ When 'Vedha' came into existence, seven mothers ( Amesha Spentas ? ) blessed Him for glory. ]

'Vedhas' and 'Medhas' are in unison with each other. The Nirukta says (3-15) that the meaning of वेधस् is मेधावि. Thus वेधा and मेधा ( वेधस् and मेधस् ) are coupled together. The Gatha also is aware of this affinity when it says मज्जदाओडदूस् ( 45-1 )- 'Meditate'. So meditation and wisdom go together. मेधस् easily changes to मज्जदस्. [ ए changes to इ, इ to य, and य to ज. Thus मेधा becomes मज्जदा just as नेदिष्ठ becomes नज्जदिष्ठ.<sup>1</sup> ]

Thus Vedhas came to be invoked as Mazda in the land of Iran.<sup>2</sup>

Some people think that the word 'Vedhas' is not a noun, but is an adjective meaning "Provident". They say that it is not the name of an independent God, like Indra or Rudra. This is a mistake on their part, as would appear from the following Rik.

आ यो विवाय सचथाय दैव्यः

इन्द्राय विष्णुः सुकृते सुकृत-तरः ।

वेधा अजिन्वन त्रिषधस्थम् आर्यम्

ऋतस्य भागे यजमानम् आभजत् ॥

Rigveda 1-156-5

[ When the holier Visnu came to mingle with holy Indra, Vedhas won over the Aryas of Trisadha reigion, and made them pious".]

It is clear from the above Rik, that Vedhas is as independent a God, as Indra or Vishnu is.

Another Rik runs as follows.

1. For the change of य into ज Cf यवनिका (curtain)=जवनिका;  
यमानी=जमानी (caraway)

2. (i) Maxmuller—Science of Mythology, p. 126

(ii) Haug—Essays on the Parsis p. 100



चकार ता कृणवन् नूनम् अन्याः

यानि ब्रवन्ति वेधसः सुतेषु ।

जनिर इव पतिर् एकः समानः

नि मामृजे इन्द्रः सु सर्वाः ॥

Rigveda 7-26-3

[ "All the feats that are attributed to Vedhas, ( in their ceremonies) were really done by Indra. For it is Indra who graces all the congregations, like one husband, common to many co-wives". ]

The above Rik is uttered by an Indra worshipper and Indra is said to be the real God behind Vedhas. It is however clear that some other people (viz. the Iranians) take Vedhas to be the true God. There is thus no ground for thinking that Vedhas is not an independent God.

As a matter of fact Vedhas is a cardinal God. All the main Gods of Rigveda are related to Him. The Veda has been accused of worshipping innumerable Gods. That is a blasphemy. There are only six principal Gods in the Veda—rather six principal phases of God-head viz. Varuna, Indra, Vedhas Rudra, Visnu and Aditi. Varuna is the original God, and other five Gods are the developments of Varuna. All the remaining Gods that there are in the Veda, are only different names, for one or other of these six main Gods. If we can follow the course of the development of the other five principal Gods out of Varuna, we would realise that the Vedic pantheon is not a confused medley, but that there is a system in it, and that system does not disrupt monotheism. The motive power behind the development, is the ideal of Mazda. This is why we say that Vedhas is a cardinal God.

Varuna is the earliest God of the Aryas. He is par excellence the God of morality, the upholder of the moral order ( 'Rita' of Veda, and 'Asa' of the Avesta ). Indra represents the aspect of the power of Varuna, and so does Vedhas too.

The former is iconic and the latter is an-iconic. We have seen how on the question of the use of the icon, the Aryas were divided into two camps, Hindus and Parsis. Rudra is the God of the re united Aryas, representing both the Indra as well as the Vedhas phase of Varuna. Visnu is the further development of Rudra, bringing into relief the divine attribute of Love, just as Rudra stresses the divine attribute of Justice. In Aditi both Rudra and Visnu are united—for she represents the Active Principle of God-head, the Active Principle of both Siva and Visnu. Too much should not be made of the male-hood and female-hood of the Deity. For God is neither male, nor female, nor neuter, and yet He is all; and Aditi has been said to be both father and mother. अदितिर् माता स पिता स पुत्रः (Rik 1-89-10). The thing that counts is that in Aditi (the Goddess of the Sakti cult), the trait of Siva (Viz Justice), and the trait of Visnu (viz. Love) are united. Rudra (Siva), Visnu, and Aditi (Sakti) are the respective Gods of the Saiva, Vaisnava, and the Sakta sects, which are the three branches of modern Hinduism. In the Vedic days these branches were known as Rudras, Vasus, and Adityas respectively आदित्यानाम् वसूनाम् रुद्रियानाम् (Rig 10-48-11). Vedhas lies at the root of the inception of the Rudra cult, and thus forms the basis of his further developments as Visnu and Aditi. The idea of Vedhas runs through the whole course. Thus Vedhas (Mazda) is a very important God of the Veda. Vedhas has been identified with Varuna ना प्रव्रवीषि वरुणाय वेधः (Rig 4-42-7) He is the replica of Indra (चकार ता, कृणवन् नुनम् अन्याः, यानि ब्रुवन्ति वेधसः सुतेषु Rig 7-26-3) He is identified with Rudra अपादाय सहमानाय वेधसे Rig 7-16-1) and Visnu is the Newer Vedhas यः पुर्वाय वेधसे नवीयसे Rig 1-156-2). [Aditi is the mother of Varuna वरुणं पूत्रम् अदित्याः इषिरम् Angirasa Veda 5-19]

There is thus every reason why we should appreciate the importance of Vedhas and re-instate Him in full glory.



Maha Ratu Zarathustra substituted a new name for Varuna. This he did in order to break up the association with Indra. In their characteristic features however, (such as the sustenance of the moral order, and loving kindness to the devotee) Mazda and Varuna are one and the same. "The evidence that identifies Varuna with Mazda, is too strong to be rejected".<sup>1</sup> "It seems to me almost an unimaginable feat of scepticism to doubt the original identity of Varuna and Mazda"<sup>2</sup>. The Iranians gave to the new cult the name of Mazda Yasna. The Indians however saw that the new religion differed little from their common ancestral religion, except in the name of Vedhas for Varuna. They therefore chose to call it पितृयान rather than मज्झा-यस्न ।

The impudence of the followers of Zarathustra aroused the anger of Indra. He began to swear vengeance on them.

खले न पर्षान् प्रतिहन्मि भूरि ।

किं मां निन्दन्ति शात्रवो अनिन्द्राः ॥ Rig. 10-48-7

[I shall crush them like leaves on the grinding stone – how do these unbelieving (अनिन्द्राः) rogues dare to vilify me ? ]

But Maha Ratu Zarathustra was made of a different stuff. He was not to be daunted by threats. He went on quietly with the task of propagating the faith. And Indra soon found to his grief that the whole of Persia and Media had adopted Mazda Yasna. They had abjured the Indra cult.

(i) सं मां तपन्त्यू अभितः सपत्नीर इव पर्षवः । Rig. 1-105-8

[ The Persians oppress me (Indra worshipper), as a co-wife does a co-wife ]

(ii) सुषो न शिश्राः वि अदन्ति माघ्यः । Rig. 10-33-2

[The Medians bite me, as the rat bites the weaver's thread.]

Parsu was the Vedic name for Persia, Madhya

1. Macnicol—Indian Theism, p. 11

2. Bloomfield—The Religion of the Veda p. 121

(subsequently changed to Madra) the name for Media, Prithu the name for Parthia<sup>1</sup>, Kuru Sravana and Cedi, the name for Khorasan. The other Iranian provinces came to be known as follows.

- (1) गान्धार = Eastern Afghanistan
- (2) कम्बोज = Western Afghanistan
- (3) बह्लीक = Bactria
- (4) केकय = Armenia

Mazda Yasna flourished in all these provinces.

Bhrigu was the preceptor of the Asura-worshippers and Angirasa the preceptor of the Deva-worshippers. The Bhrigu people adopted Mazda Yasna and Angirasa people stuck to Deva Yasna. Bhrigu means bright and Angirasa means dark (cf. वंगार=coal). Both are Fire-cults, and Bhrigu may be said to represent the flame and Angirasa, the ember.<sup>2</sup> The ember is darker as compared with the flame. The ember is material (ponderable) and the flame is immaterial (imponderable). The Bhrigus were more fervorous. That may have been the cause of the original designation. But it is also physically true. The Hindus are darker than the Parsis, as the Mahabharata also observes, when it describes the worshippers of Hari Medhas as इवेत (Santi Parva 335-10). The word Hindu gradually came to mean black, as Hafiz tells us in the oft-quoted lines

अगर आन तुर्के शिराजी, बदस्त आरद दिले मा रा ।  
ब खाले हिन्दु अश विवखशम, समरकन्द ओ बुखारारा ॥

1. The close association of पृथु and पर्शु in the line—प्राचा गव्यन्तः पृथू पर्शवः ययुः (Rig 7-83-1). [The Parthians and Persians went east-ward in search] fixes the meaning of both the names. It also supports the view that the Aryans migrated east-ward (from Iran to India).
2. भृगु इत्येव भृगुः पूर्वम् अङ्गारेभ्यो अङ्गिरा अभवत्

Mahabharata—Anusasana Parva 85-105



[If that girl of Shiraz, would bring back my heart to me, I would give Samarkand and Bukhara in exchange for her black mole. ]

Thus there grew up a dissension between the Bhrigus and the Angirasas. The Bhrigus occupied the western regions, the Angirasas spread eastward. Indra is called अंगिरश्म—the greatest patron of the Angirasas (Rigveda 1-100-4). He predominated in Sapta Sindhu (Rik 8-24-27) i. e.—the eastern provinces.

We may trace references to the Angirasas and the Bhrigus even in the Gatha. The Gatha says that the Angirasas devised the practice of icon-worship या अन्ग्रया कर्पनो उरुपयेइन्नी (48-10). Angiras becomes Angira, by dropping the final स in accordance with the Vartika स्नोर् अन्तयोर् लोपः (final स and न often drop in Vedic words). Angira is the form that we find in the Mundaka Upanishad, (1-2-2)

अथर्वा तां प्रोवाच अंगिरे ब्रह्मविद्याम्

Angira further contracts as Angra in the Zend, and it changes to Angra-ya by addition of या in प्रथमा plural, by the rule सुपां सुलुक् (Panini 71-39). Usij (or Usik) who is a descendant of Brihaspati (Rig 1-18-1, 10 99 11) is mentioned in the Gatha (44-10). The Bhrigus are referred to in the Gatha, as Spitamas (46 15) i. e. white-moats. For Bhrigu is more widely known as Sukra or the White one.

The difference between the Bhrigus and the Angirasas resulted in the compilation of a supplementary Veda (the Atharva Veda—the Veda of the Fire Priest). Atharva also means that which comes afterwards, It is derived from the root ऋ, ऋच्छति=to go; (अथ+ऋ+वनिप्). अथर्वान् is the Sanskrit equivalent of Zend आथ्वान i. e. अत्रिवान् or Fire Keeper. This Veda is called the Veda of the Fire-Priest, for unlike the three original Vedas, it is more concerned with the preservation of the domestic fire (discharge of domestic

duties) than the performance of big sacrifices like Jyotistoma etc.

Panini was familiar with the Avesta (1.3-25)—the Veda compiled at the instance of the Prophet of the Asura cult. There must have been others in India who, like Panini, saw the Avesta. Bhavisya Purana describes Atharva Veda as the Veda of the Maghas.<sup>1</sup>

The word "Pustaka" (book) itself, (Apistaka) is said to have been derived from "Avesta",<sup>2</sup> so the Avesta must have been very familiar in India. There seems to be little doubt that by Bhargava Samhita, the Gopatha Brahmana intends the Avesta.

It is gratifying for the Parsis to know that the Gopatha Brahmana, the Sankhayana Sutra and Sayana too, consider the Bhargava Samhita to be better than the Angirasa Samhita of the Atharva Veda. The Gopatha Brahmana (1-1-1-15) compares the Bhargava Samhita to sweet water, and the Angirasa Samhita to saline water. The Sankhayana Sutra (XVI-I) calls the Bhargava Veda भेषज (genial) and the Angirasa Veda घोर (rough). While Sayana, in the introduction to his commentary on the Atharva Veda, considers Bhargava to be शान्त (calm) and Angirasa to be घोर (rough). The Hindus also may congratulate themselves that their forbears had the generosity to admit the excellence of the scripture of a rival sect. Nay, they even admitted the superiority of the Asura worship.

(1) यथा देवाः असुरेषु श्रद्धां उग्रेषु चक्रिरे । Rik 10-151-3

[Just as the Devas entertain respect for the stalwart Asuras

(2) अयं देवानाम् असुरो विराजति । Angirasa Veda 1-10 1

[This Ahura lords it over the Devas.]

All the same the spirit of rivalry is also quite patent.

1. (i) Bloomfield...Hymns of the Atharva Veda (Introduction)

(ii) Hodivala—Parsis of India p. 86

2. Spiegel—Grammar of the Parsi Language p, 204

Zarathushtra claims for Mazda the glory of defeating Vritra, (Sukta 44-16) which according to the Rigveda is the monopoly of Indra.

The Angirases on the other hand claim that all the deeds that are attributed to Vedhas (Mazda) were really done by Indra.

चकार ता कृणवन् नूनम् अन्या यानि व्र वन्ति वेधसः सुतेषु

Rigveda 7-26-3

And it is really Indra whom the other sect worships, when they offer prayers to Vedhas—for Indra rules over both the communities.

स पत्यते उभयोर् नृमन्योः यद् ईं वेधसः समिधे हवन्ते

The rivalry presisted through the period of the Brahmanas and the Upanishads.

In the Aitareya Brahmana (1-23) there is the story of such a conflict. The Asuras fortified their cities very strongly and the Devas did not succeed with them. The Devas there upon invented the Upasad ceremony (in which plenty of milk has to be drunk by the sacrificer) and were thus able to overthrow the Asuras.<sup>1</sup>

In the Satapatha Brahmana (1-2-5) there is another story. The Deva-worshippers wanted to fit up a piece of land for the performance of a Yajna to Vishnu. The Asura-worshippers would not allow them to do so. The Asuras seem to have been the stronger party, and the Devas felt much dejected that they could not do their religious service. The Asuras however relented and said 'we can give you only so much land as Vishnu can occupy,' and the Devas were glad of it. We find here that the Devas got the worse of it.

In the Chandogya Upanishad (1-2) we find a story where also the Devas did not fare better. This time the contention was over a more serious matter, viz. the form of the

1. Haug—Religion of the Parsis p. 271

Udgitha or Pranava. Pranava is the root mantra, the essence of all the mantras (Gita 7-8). The Indian form of the Pranava is Om, consisting of three letters A, U, and M. It seems that the Ahura-worshippers wanted to change it. They wanted to change it to HON, consisting of three letters H, U, and N. They would substitute अ by ह and म by न, उ remaining unaffected. It is related in the passage that the Asuras succeeded in piercing (विविधुः) the Pranava, which means that they killed the old Pranava. They brought into use a new form of Pranava—'Hon' in place of 'Om' (उ becomes ओ by sandhi with अ of ह)

ह (H) is the cognate of अ (A); substitution of अ by ह serves to turn a soft consonant into hard e. g.

क्+अ=क	क्+ह=ख
ग्+अ=ग	ग्+ह=घ
च्+अ=च	च्+ह=छ
प्+अ=प	प्+ह=फ

Thus अ and ह form a pair; similarly म and न also form a pair. Thus Hon is the nearest approach to Om. The addition of 'A' before 'Hon', is prothetic, made merely for facility of pronunciation.

Thus Om-kara (the sound Om) is virtually the same as Hon-vara (the sound Hon). They are the nearest agnates.

The Parsi Pranava Hon (or Hun, without the sandhi) has been adopted by the Saivas, on the ground that ह is stronger than अ.

अकारः सर्ववर्णाग्र्यः प्रकाशः परमः शिवः  
हकारः व्योमरूपः स्याच्च शक्त्यात्मा संप्रकीर्तितः

Siva—Purana-Kailas Samhita 11-39.

In Tantra literature Hun (हूँ) is the mantra used for arousing the serpent power (coiled up spiritual energy)

हूँकारोच्चारणेनैव समुत्थाय परां शिवाम्

Gandharva Tantra 11-35



The Budhists have retained both Om and Hon in their famous formula ॐ मणिपद्मे हूं [I meditate 'Om' in the Manipura lotus (the third plexus of the षट् चक्र equipment)]

With the division of the Pranava, the separation of the mantras of the Bhrigus and the Angirasas was completed. They would henceforth use altogether different mantras in their prayers.

भृगुभिर् अंगिरोभिश्च हुतं मंत्रैः पृथग्-विधैः Vana Paiva 223-14

All the same there was not complete rupture between the two communities. The Bhrigus and the Angirasas would still join in the same Yajna, only each party would utter its special mantras, presumably by turn, as seems to be the import of the above line.

This state of things continued for some time. The Upanishads however did not encourage the performance of Yajnas.

प्लवा द्योते अट्टा यज्ञरूपाः ।

अष्टादशोक्तम् अवरं येषु कर्म ॥

Mundaka 1-2-7

[The Yajnas are like broken rafts—they do not take one to the shore.]

Yajna fell into disuse. A new form of worship cropped up in its place—the Puja form, as against the Yajna form. This consisted of offering fruits, flowers and leaves पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं—as the Gita, 9-26, says) instead of libation of ghee and Soma juice. The Bhargavas of India established a new school of Bhakti, which is known as the Panca-Ratra. sect. It is, as Lokamanya Tilak in his master-piece, the Gita-Rahasya, amply proves, the earliest school of Bhakti cult in India. The fact that it is said to be unvedic<sup>1</sup> (=unorthodox)

1. (i) Sankara Bhasya on Brahma Sutra 2-2-5

(ii) Ganganath Jha—Tantra Vartik p. 165

and that it used to offer prayers five times a day (which practice is responsible for its name as Pancaratra, (panca=five. रात्र=आरात्र=worship) points to its Iranian origin. Subsequently, however, after the advent of Krishna, the Pancaratra lost its identity, and became amalgamated with the Bhakti cult of the Vaisnavas. The Narayaniya chapters of the Mahabharata calls them "satwatas". i. e. advocates of Satwa Guna (Spenta-Manyu) as the essential feature of God.

When we say that western Iran adopted Mazda Yasna, we do not mean a water-tight zonal division of the two peoples. There were some Deva-Yanists in the western block and some Mazda Yasnists in the eastern. There was no doubt a conflict of ideal between the Bhrigus and the Angirasas, but the Indo-Iranians were much too refined a people to think of deciding theological issues with the help of the sword. There was no attempt to extirpate the Angirasas from the western block, or to extirpate the Bhargavas from the eastern.

Not that political wars did not sometimes crop up. A noteworthy instance we find in the famous Dasa-raja war—the war of the ten kings as it is called. King Cayamana of Bactria had attacked king Sudasa of Panjab. The allies gathered round both the kings. A graphic description of this war will be found in Sukta 18 of the 7th mandala of the Rigveda. King Cayamana was defeated and he lay on the battle-field like a dead beast पशुष् कविर् अशयच् चयमानः (7-18-8). But it was merely a political fight between two kings. It had nothing to do with the religious faith of the people. For we find Vasista and Viswamitra giving their aid to Sudasa, and both these sages had predilection for the Iranian cult. Vasista is the chief of the sages who sang the hymns of Asura Varuna<sup>1</sup> (the replica of Ahura Mazda) and Viswamitra announced that the divinity of all

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1. Griswold—The Religion of the Rigveda p. 112

the gods rested in Ahura Mazat. (Rig. 3-55-1). Some Angirasa families lived happily in western Iran. Not to speak of western Iran, both the Bhrigus and the Angirasa were to be found even in Greece, where they were known as Phlegyai and Angigos respectively<sup>1</sup>.

A very conspicuous instance of the Angirasa settlement in western Iran is provided by what is known as the Boghaskui inscription. Boghaskui is a hill-tract near Ankara, the capital of Asia Minor. In 1910 Winckler, the great German archaeologist discovered there an inscription in which Subbililiama, king of the Hittites proclaims his fath in Mitra, Varuna, Indra and the two Nasatyas ( मित्रस्य इलानि वरुणस्य इलानि इन्द्र इलानि नासत्या अन्य )<sup>2</sup> The Hittites were the forefathers of the Armenians<sup>3</sup> and Armenia at that time included the whole of Asia Minor. The mention of Indra is indicative of the Angirasa cult, and the inscription testifies that the Angirasa cult flourished in the area at that period. The discovery of Winckler has dealt a hard blow to the speculations of Spiegel, Macnicol and others who are very eager to find traces of Semitic influence in the Veda and the Upastha.<sup>4</sup> They would have been very glad indeed if the influence of Jesus Christ could be traced, but as that is not possible, it is some consolation to find the Prophets of Israel exerting their influence. Boghaskui inscription is a severe disappointment to them. Subbililiama ruled over Armenia in the 14th centuries B.C., and Judaic religion was promulgated two centuries later. It synchronises with the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt into Palestine under the lead of Moses.<sup>5</sup> This event took place in the 12th century B.C. The Indo-Iranians had

1. Macdonell—Vedic Mythology p. 142-144

2. Umesh Vidyaratna—Manaber Adi Janmabhumi p, 447

3. Welle—A Short History of the World, Chap. XVII

4. Browne—Literary History of Persia p. 36, 65

5. Historians History of World Vol. II p. 58

developed their own religion without the aid of the prophets of Israel.

We find that Deva Yasna also was prevalent in Armenia in the 14th century B.C. That speaks much for the mutual toleration of the Bhrigus and the Angirasas. Then again the Bhrigus were not the only people that lived in Iran. There were the Vasistas, the original stem, out of which grew up the Bhrigus and the Angirasas. The Vasistas sang the praise of Varuna. Their cult has been called Ahura-tkesa in the Avesta (and sometimes as Pairyo-tkesa, i.e. the religion of the ancients) as distinct from Mazda Yasna. Mazda Yasna was intolerant of Indra, but the Pairyo-tkesa was more tolerant.

There was much good feeling between the Vasistas and the Bhrigus, because they were conscious that they worshipped the same Deity. For Mazda differed from Varuna in name alone. There is considerable affinity in their character. "Ahura Mazda agrees with Varuna in character though not in the name".<sup>1</sup> "It is certain that Varuna and Ahura Mazda were either identical, as Oldenburg thinks, or were parallel forms the same conception".<sup>2</sup> "One of the most interesting parallels between Veda and Avesta is that both the Gods (Varuna and Mazda) are described as the Spring of Rita or righteousness. Varuna is 'Kha Ritasya' (Rig. 2-28-5) and Ahura Mazda 'Ashahe Khao' (Yas. 10-4). The words are sound for sound the same".<sup>3</sup>

The matter need not be left to conjecture alone. Varuna is the 44th name in the list of 100 names of Ahura Mazda (that some Parsis felt inclined to resort to, tired by the monotony of one name. They thought that there was no harm in addressing the Infinite by infinite names expressive

1. Macdonell...Vedic Mythology p. 25

2. Griswold...Religion of the Rigveda p. 11

3. Bloomfield...The Religion of the Vedas p. 125

of His infinite attributes).<sup>1</sup> The matter is set at rest by the definite statement of the Rigveda, that Varuna came to be called as Mazda

विदुष टे विश्वा भुवनानि तस्य  
ता प्रब्रवीषि वरुणाय वेधस्—Rig. 4-42-7

[The whole world knows him. Only some people call Varuna by the name of Vedhas]

(ब्रवीषी is used in place of ब्रुवन्ति by the dictum सुप् तिङ्-उपग्रह etc. which says that suffixes in Veda often change places).

“The priestly family of the Vasistas was very specially the guardian of the worship of Varuna during pre-Vedic and Vedic days”<sup>2</sup> The Rigveda states how Varuna rescued Vasista from drowning

वशिष्ठं हि वरुणो नावि आधात्—Rig. 7-88-4

Along with the Vasistas, the Bhrigus also were first attached to Varuna. Thus the Taittiriya Upanishad calls Bhrigu as “Varuni” (attached to Varuna) and says that he used to worship Father Varuna

भृगुर् वै वारुणिर् वरुणं पितरं उपससार

Taittiriya Upanisad-Bhrigu Valli

The Mahabharat also says that the Bhargavas were worshippers of Varuna भार्गवाः वारुणाः सर्वे (Anusasan 85-129).

It appears that after Mazda-Yasna started its course. Bhrigu transferred his allegiance from Varuna (to Vedhas)

भृगुर् ह वै वारुणिः वरुणं पितरं विद्या (विद्यया) अतिमेने

—Satapatha Bhrahmana 11-4 5

[“On further consideration (विद्या) Bhrigu, a follower of Varuna, by-passed (अतिमेने) Father Varuna”.]

1. Anklesaria...Yasna ba Mani p, 24

2. Griswold...The Religion of the Rigveda p. 112



Henceforth Bhrigu came to be known as the priest of the Asura cult i.e. the follower of Ahura Mazda.

Subsequently when the attempt was made to introduce Mazda into India, under the ideology of Siva, Bhrigu came to be known as the son of Siva (Santi Parva 289-34). All the Puranas describe how Siva is the unfailing patron of the Asuras. But more of this strange story later on. Here we are concerned only with the fact that before Siva appeared on the scene, Bhrigu, the priest of Asura cult, was known to be the son of Varuna. That shows the intimacy that existed between Vasistas (who were pre-eminently the followers of Varuna) and the Bhrigus who also were followers of Varuna before they turned to Mazda. The relation between the Vasistas and the Bhrigus was very friendly. Though the relation between the Bhrigus and the Angirasas (the followers of Mazda and the followers of Indra) was a bit strained, that did not develop into relentless enmity.

We have seen how the Asuras though sworn to aniconism, allowed to the Devas a piece of land for the worship of Vishnu. And though the Asuras changed the pranava from Aum to Hun, the Devas did not repudiate it altogether. They adopted the "Hun" in the Saiva and the Tantra cults.

Not to speak of "HUN" alone, the Angirasas adopted even the term "Ahura" (the Iranian version) in their scripture

अहुर इदं ते परिदाम्यहम्

Mantra Brahmana (of Sama Veda) 1-6-21

[ O Ahura, here, to thee, I present so-and-so ]

As a matter of fact, the Tantra cult seems to have been devised in order to absorb all that was best in the Mazda-Yasna and which had been left unassimilated by the Saiva cult. And so, in spite of the subsequent gross abuse which has made the name of the Tantra so disreputable, it has to its credit the honour of an attempt to absorb the vitalising features of Mazda-Yasna. Thus it revived the faith in

(i) the house-holder's life (ii) caste-equality in matters of worship (iii) martial spirit and (iv) reclamation of the Vratyas (aborigines) as was the instruction of Maha Ratu Zarathustra. The Tantra also revived the Yajna form of worship, which the Parsis have retained uninterrupted up to the present day, but which the Hindus neglected during the period of the Upanishads on account of their ascetic tendencies. The Puranas also neglected the Yajna and preferred the puja form of worship. In Tantra the Puja has to be supplemented by the Yajna.

Thus it may be said that the relation between the Bhrigus and the Angirasas was more one of the rivalry than that of enmity. Though some Angirasas resented the dominance of the Maghas

मा वः स्तेनः ईशत मघशंसः (Rigveda 6-28-7)

"May not the sneak Magha-Lover lord it over you" and tried to raise the morale of the Devas by saying that the Asuras were ill-equipped अनायुधासः असुराः अदेवाः (Rigveda 8-96-9) there were many others who openly admitted the superiority of the Asuras यथा देवाः असुरेषु श्रद्धां उग्रेषु चक्रिरे (Rigveda 10-151-3) The Devas entertain respect towards the stalwart Asuras. Then again the fire cult was common to both the communities, as the Rigveda notes वेत्था हि वेधो अध्वनः पथश्च देवाज्जसा (Rigveda 6-16-3) O Agni, you know both the ways—the way of Vedhas (Mazda) and the path of Deva-lustre.

नू मे ब्रह्माणि अग्न उच शशाधि, त्वं देव मघवद्भ्यः सुषूदः ।  
रातौ स्याम उभयास आ ते, यूयं पात स्वस्तिभिः सदा नः ॥

(Rig 7-1-20)

[ O Agni, teach us our prayer. Bless the Maghavats [Zarathustrians) too. May *both the communities* be in your protection. Help us always to welfare. ]

In the circumstances, when two communities that came out of the same stock, were living in close proximity and had

no intention to resort to force of arms for the decision of theological difference, some attempt at rapprochement was very natural. Such desire found expression in three different ways, viz.

(1) Attempt at friendly intercourse often leading to mutual conversion.

(2) Attempt for the assimilation of the best elements of the other cult.

(3) Attempt for the harmony, through a synthesis of the cults.

We find traces of all such attempts in the Rigveda.

Thus we find sage Agastya (apparently an Ahura worshipper) addressing Indra as follows :

किं नु इन्द्र जिघांससि, भ्रातरः मरुत्सु तव ।

तेभिः कल्पस्व साधुया, मा नः समरणे वधीः ॥ (Rigved 1-170-2)

[Why O Indra, are you so inimical to the invisible Gods (Maruts). They are your brothers. Behave with them gently. Do not fight and slay us.]

Another sage (Dyutana) also made a proposal for peace मरुद्भिर् इन्द्र सख्यं ते अस्तु (Rigveda 8-96-7) O Indra, Let there be friendship between you and the Maruts (invisible Gods.)

But Indra was not be taken in so easily. He replied.

किं नु भ्रातर् अगस्त्य, सखा सच्च अतिमन्यसे ।

विद्या हि ते यथा मनो, अस्मभ्यम् इन् न दित्ससि ॥ (Rig 1-170-3)

['How it is brother Agastya, that though a friend, you still disdain us ? I know your mind. It is not inclined to us] (you profess equality of both the communities, but you have more love for Ahura worship.)

Thus the attempt of Agastya failed. But it did not always fail. We find Sayana quoting the case of an illustrious conversion.

यः अंगिरसः शौनहोत्रो भूत्वा, भार्गवः शौनकः अभवत्

Sayana Bhasya—beginning of the 2nd Mandala

The story runs as follows. Sunahotra was an Angirasa sage. He was caught hold by Ahura worshippers and converted to the Bhargava cult.<sup>1</sup> Then he came to be known as Saunaka. In plain words this means that Sunahotra gave up the Indra cult and took to Mazda Yasna. This was a very remarkable success for the Ahura worshippers. For Sunahotra is identified with Gritsamada, who is reputed to be the compiler of the second book of the Rigveda. That the composer of a whole chapter of the Rigveda was converted to the Ahura cult was not a small victory. That an Angirasa can become a Bhargava, suggests that the names indicated two creeds and not two races.

The Deva Yanists also were not asleep. They won over some sages of Iran and one of them cried out.

वह्नी समाः अकरम् अन्तरस्मिन्, इन्द्रं वृणानः पितरं जहामि ।

अग्निः सोमः वरुणस्ते च्यवन्ते, पर्यावद् राष्ट्रं तद् अवामि आयन् ॥

(Rigveda 10-12-4)

[Many a year I have lived with them. I would now adopt Indra and abjure Father (ancestral God). Varuna (along with his Fire and Soma) has retreated. the old regime has changed. I would accept the new order.]

The story of these old conversions is extremely interesting. But the scholars failed to give recognition to the Upastha as the Bhargava Veda, and thereby lost the key to the interpretation of the Indo-Iranian religious commerce.

Let us now turn to the topic of assimilation which is of much greater consequence. The portrait of Ahura Mazda, severe in enforcing justice (Gatha 42-5), and yet as loving as the father or the friend (Gatha 45-11), as presented by Maha

1. Maxmuller—History of Sanskrit Literature p. 232

Ratu Zarathustra, was so alluring that the Indian sages felt tempted to import Him to India.

Brihaspati (the preceptor of Devas) sent his son Kaca, to Bhrigu (the preceptor of the Asuras). Kaca became the disciple of Bhrigu and learnt from him the secret of the sciences that brought immortality to the Asuras. This forms the subject matter of विदाय अभिशाप the charming lyrical drama of Rabindranath Tagore.

A conspicuous attempt for assimilation was made by the famous sage Viswamitra. It is said that he had been a Kshatriya and became a Brahmin. This probably means that he originally belonged to the Iranian creed which upholds the militant Kshatriya type of character, and then changed over to the Indian creed which upholds the Brahmana type. He could not however forget his love for Mazda, and in his famous hymn (Rig 3-55) he sings the glory of Mazda under the name of Mahat (=Mazat). The name 'Mazda' had by this time been stereotyped; and so the Rishi does not turn to the original form 'Vedhas'. He makes the nearest approach to Mazda, and calls the God by the names of महत् which would sound like मजत् (for ह and ज are interchangeable, as in हस्त and जस्त (=hand) and अहम् and अजेम् = 'I' )

There are 21 stanzas in this hymn and the burden (last line) of all the stanzas is the declaration, that the divinity of all the Gods are concentrated in Mazda.

महत् देवानाम् असुरत्वं एकम्

That Mazda cult is the source of the inspiration of the famous hymn, is apparent (apart from the similarity in the sounds of Mazat and Mazda) from the fact that to express the idea of Divinity, the word used is असुरत्वं (Ahura-hood) and not देवत्वं (Deva-hood). That leaves no doubt about the impact of the Ahura cult.



Some people have taken the word महत् here, as an adjective, qualifying the noun असुरत्व, meaning great divinity. This is a mistake. That the word महत् here is a noun, is evident from the second line of the first stanza, the first time that Mahat is used in the hymn.

It says

उषसः पूर्वा अथ यद् विजुषुर्,

महत् विजज्ञे अक्षरं पदे गोः ।

Rigveda 3-55-1

[ He who existed even before the dawn ( of creation ), that imperishable Mahat manifested Himself (विजज्ञे) along the wake of the universe (पदे गोः)]. Here 'Mahat' is the noun and अक्षर ( eternal ) is the adjective. The same महत् is repeated in the fourth line.

The song of Viswamitra (proclaiming that Mahat [Mazda] constitutes the sole divinity of all the Devas) seems to have restored friendliness in both the communities. It is not unlikely that god Mitra (Avestic Mithra) came into being as its result. Mitra means a friend, and the two rival gods, Indra and Mazda, came to be looked upon, by the liberals of both the communities, as friends (replica) of each other. When a liberal Indian said 'Mitra', he meant, 'Mazda' the friend of Indra, and when a liberal Iranian said Mitra, he meant 'Indra', the friend of Mazda. Thus so far as easy-going people are concerned, Mitra became a common God, common to both the communities. In Yasna 4—16, 6—10, and 7—13 Mazda and Mitra are mentioned together. The rigid Iranians however abrogated Mithra altogether, partly because Mithra ( i. e. Indra ) is associated with Icon-worship, and partly because the idea of an associate God, is revolting to a strict monotheist.

Viswamitra came to be known as ऐल ( Iranophile or lover of Iran ).<sup>1</sup> It is not unlikely that this famous hymn, which extols

Mahat (=Mazda) in all its 22 stanzas, is responsible for this designation.

In any case Viswamitra seems to have accepted the name Mazda (Introduced by Zamad-Agni, the prophet of Ahura worship) while Vasistha stuck to the old name Varuna. That seems to be the real cause of the dissension between Vasistha and Viswamitra, which is the story of all the Puranas.

In this hymn (3-55-1) stress is laid on the similarity of the sounds between Mazat and Mazda. In the subsequent attempts, more stress laid on the traits of Mazda Yasna.

The outstanding features of Mazda-Yasna (as Maha Ratu Zarathustra had taught it) is simplicity and rejection of unnecessary ceremonials. Ceremonials had come to claim so much of the attention of the devotees in Deva Yasna, that it left him little time to think of God. "Whether an action is to be performed to the left or to the right, whether a pot is to be put in this or that spot on the place of sacrifice, whether a blade of grass is to be laid down with the point to the north or the north-east, whether the priest steps in front of the fire or behind it, in which direction he must have his face turned, into how many parts the sacrificial cake is to be divided, whether the ghee is to be poured into the northern or the southern half or into the centre of the fire, at which instant the repetition of a certain spell or a certain song has to take place—these are the questions on which generations of priests meditated" <sup>1</sup>. This reminds one of the Bengali adage सोना थुए केवल आँचले गिरा सार—to tie a knot in the scarf leaving out the piece of gold (for which the knot is meant). Ceremonials are only means, but they tend to become ends in themselves. Atharvan Zarathustra asked the people to pay more attention to the end than to the means; to be thinking of Mazda, and not of the cere-

1. Winternitz—A History of Indian Literature. p. 197

monials. This is the meaning of his condemnation of ceremonials (देवयम Yasna 30-5 ) and his acclamation of love (उर्वजिमा Yasna 32-1 ).

Another feature of Mazda-Yasna is Zarathustra's regard for equality. No one was to be excluded from the worship of Mazda. It matters little whether a man is an Aryamna, a Verejena, or a Khaetu (Yasna 33-3); even non-Aryans were not to be excluded from taking part in the worship of Mazda (Yasna 46-12).

Some Indian sages realised the worth of these noble ideals and conceived the idea of incorporating them in their own system. They resorted to the old god Rudra who was eminently suited for their purpose.

Rudra was very glorious रुद्रो गरुत्वान् (Rig. 1-114-11) He was easily propitiated सुहव (Rig 2-33-5) or आशुतोष as told in the Puranas. He showers favour on all (Rig 2-33-7, 6-49-10), and He was the Lord of all the three regions—Ira, Saraswati and Mahi [i.e. Iran, Sapta Sindhu ( Afghanistan & l'unjab) and India]. This is why He is called त्र्यम्बक (the son of three mothers)<sup>1</sup> Above all, He was the God of the Vratyas or backward classes<sup>2</sup>. Being the God of the uncivilised people, (Vratya means 'yet to be civilised' ), Rudra is accessible to all. These uncivilised people had neither the patience nor the time to learn all the intricacies of the different ceremonials devised by priest-craft. Ceremonials had to be simplified for the sake of the Vratyas, and the procedure for the worship of Rudra was very simple. In these respects there was considerable similarity between Mazda and Rudra. But kindness had not been so prominent a feature in Rudra, so Rudra was converted to Siva (Rig 10-92-9) to make the

1. Keith—Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and the Upanisad

2. Angirasa Veda—Chapter XV. The Satapatha Brahmana assures us that Rudra was worshipped in Bactrea

resemblance complete. It is to be noted that vindication of justice, and not vindictiveness, is the cause of the punishment inflicted by Rudra. The benefit of the culprit is the motive of Rudra. He punishes like a parent. This made the transition of austere Rudra into kind Siva easy. Evolution of Siva out of Rudra is expressed by the Swetaswatara Upanishad in the celebrated sloka रुद्र यत् ते दक्षिणं मुखं तेन मां पाहि नित्यम् (4-21), a mantra which has been included in the prayer book of the Brahmo Samaj. Rudra was supposed to have two faces (aspect)—a right face and a left face, and in his right aspect, he was known as Siva.

Siva now appeared to be the very replica of Ahura Mazda, and was presented to the Indians for acceptance. But the leading Angirases could not be deceived by the change of name. They thought that it was the same Mazda-Yasna that had rebelled against the icon, rebelled against rituals, and rebelled against caste. They put up a stubborn opposition to the worship of Siva. Their leader was the old sage Daksha, who would, on no account, allow the worship to be celebrated, though he may have to lose his head in the fight.

But the opposition did not avail. The lure of Mazda was much too strong. All the Puranas describe the fate of Daksha, and it is a sight for all the angels to see that the unfailing patron of the Asuras now occupies the place of honour in the pantheon of the Hindus, possessing co-ordinate status with Vishnu.

The opposition of Daksha to the Siva cult is not an invention of the Puranas. We find it expressed in the proclamation of a sage named Agni.

शिवं यत् सन्तं अशिवो जहामि ।  
स्वात् सख्यात् अरणिं नाभिम् एमि ॥

Rigveda 10-124-2

[ I would disown Siva, even if I have to forsake my own people and live amongst aliens. ]

No doubt the worship of Siva has now, to a large extent, been Hinduised and icon has entered into it. But originally it was aniconic (Swetaswatara 3-19) and the ideal still persists in the Vira Saiva sect.<sup>1</sup> The Siva cult does not recognise the distinction of caste, stage ( आश्रम ) and sex.

ब्रह्म यत्र विशः शूद्राः स्त्रियश् चात्राधिकारिणः ।

ब्रह्मचारी गृहस्थो वा अनुपनीतो अथवा द्विजः ।

वनस्थो वा अवनस्थो वा यतिः पाशुपतः व्रती ॥

Siva Gita—16-2

Nor does it encourage ceremonies

न तिथिर् न च नक्षत्रं नोपवासो विधीयते ।

अघोर-स्मरणाद् देवी सर्वपापक्षयो भवेत् ॥

Siva Purana-Dharma Samhita 40-1

And this is the system that Parsu Rama had learnt from Lord Siva.

ततः रामः सुशिक्षायै जगाम हरम् अन्तिके ।

ज्ञात्वा सर्वाणि शास्त्राणि तस्माद् अस्त्रविदांवरः ॥

Siva Purana, Dharma Samhita 30-34

The attempt of Maharshi Swetaswatara to introduce the ideals of Maha Ratu Zarathushtra was, however, more methodical. His totem Ashwatara (mule)<sup>2</sup> has considerable resemblance

1. Macnicol—Indian Theism p. 179

2. The name is a compound of two words Sweta (white) and Aswatara (colt). It may mean either (1) a person having a white colt or (2) a person spotless as a white colt. Zarathushtra is a compound of two words Zarat (yellow-Sans. Harit) and Ustra (Camel) i. e. (1) a person having a yellow camel, or (2) one who is useful as the yellow camel, or (3) a notable person who has taken up the camel, as the insignia of



to the Ushtra (camel) of Zarathushtra. This resemblance is only extrinsic. But in intrinsic matters, viz. their ideals, the resemblance is much stronger. Let us take up the question of Bhakti i. e. worship through love. This is the special contribution of Zarathushtra (Yasna 32-1). And in Upanishadic literature 'Bhakti' is heard for the first time in Swetaswatara (6-23).<sup>1</sup>

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his mission (cf.—the British Lion, the Russian Bear, or the American Eagle).

Closely connected is the significance of the word "Zarathushtra-tama". In later days, priests of Iran, took pride in describing them as Zarathushtra-tama i. e. a humble follower of Zarathushtra. The word proved a hard nut to some scholars, who had the delusion, that the suffix "tama" has the superlative sense alone. It was difficult for them to reconcile how a humble priest could call himself the greatest Zarathushtra (vide the Treasure of the Magi-P 198). They might know that "Tara" and "Tama" have comparative and superlative sense only when added to adjectives e. g. Caru-tara, or priya-tama. Added to nouns, they bear a diminutive sense, e. g.

- (1) Aswa=horse. Aswa-tara=colt,
- (2) Vatsa=calf. Vatsa-tara=Young calf.
- (3) Goni=sack. Goni-tara=small sack, or purse.

So Zarathushtra-tama means the least Zarathustra (a humble servant of Zarathustra) and not the greatest Zarathushtra. It may be noted that Aryan Tirthan-karas (Makers of Path=Prophets) were fond of associating domestic animals in their names. Thus cow is associated in the names of Govinda (Krishna), and Gautama (Buddha), and camel in the name of Zarathushtra, (and colt in the nama of Swetaswatara). This accords with the higher Ethics of the fellowship of man and animals.

1. Macnicol—Indian Theism p, 163



The atmosphere of the Upanishads is that of Jnana Yoga. It knows only the Impersonal God (Brahma). Maharsi Swetaswatara, like Zarathushtra, emphasises the importance of the Personal God.

Then again monotheism is the great message of Zarathushtra, and Swetaswatara proclaims monotheism in such strong terms as would not be found anywhere else.

एको हि रुद्रो न द्वितीयाय तस्युः । Swetaswatara 3-2

[ Rudra is one. He does not stand (tolerate) a second. ]

Zarathushtra denounced iconolatry and Swetaswatara repeats.

अपाणिपादो ज्वनो ग्रहीता

पश्यत्य् अचक्षः शृणोत्य् अकर्णः । Swetaswatara 3-19

[ He catches without hands. He walks without feet. He sees without eyes and He hears without ears. ]

Zarathushtra had disparaged the caste system and Swetaswatara says that his message is meant for अत्याश्रमि (6-21) i. e. persons who have out-grown the need of वर्णाश्रम (caste and stage).

Zarathushtra has laid stress on organisation (formation of the Magha) and Swetaswatara preached his gospel to the ऋषिसंघ (6-21)—congregation of saints.

Thus Swetaswatara had been following the footsteps of Zarathushtra, looking to the right face of Rudra. His Upanishad is more systematic than the Sata Rudriya Chapter (Chap XVI) of the Yajurveda, and thus forms the basic scripture of the Saiva sect. Thus India is indebted to Zarathushtra for the development, if not the inception, of the Siva cult. This belief is confirmed by the tradition that Bhrigu became a Prophet through the grace of Siva.



गतः शुक्रत्वं उशना देवदेव-प्रसादतः Santi Parva 292-14 <sup>1</sup>

Not Siva alone, but Vishnu too, the highest God of Hinduism, appears to be the result of the impact of Zarathushtrianism on India.

Indra, the chief God of the Angirasas, was too much of a warrior. The conception of Zarathushtra, that Mazda was dear to man, and man was dear to Mazda (Yansa—46-2, 44-1, 50-5) pointed to the necessity of softening down Indra. Love should be realised to be the dominant feature in God's character, "We must love the Power to which we submit; otherwise there is nothing religious in our submission, nothing but resignation to a fatality".<sup>2</sup> A God of love and not a God of fear is the ideal that Zarathushtra had preached and the Angirasas did not like to lag behind. Thus Indra grew into Vishnu. This is why a famous name of Vishnu happens to be उपेन्द्र i. e. Supra Indra. The following line of the Rigveda points out their identity.

सूत इन्द्राय विष्णवे (Rig 9-63-3)

[ Brewed for the sake of Vishnu, who is Indra. ]

That Vishnu evolved out of Indra, and that also as the result of the impact of Mazda Yasna, is not an idle conjecture. The Rigveda states this fact in so many words.

आ यो विवाय सचथाय दैव्यः, इन्द्राय विष्णुः सुकृते सुकृत्-तरः ।

वेधा अजिन्वन् त्रिषधस्थम् आर्यम्, ऋतस्य भागे यजमानम् आभजत् ॥

Rig. 1-165-5

1. It is interesting to note that Mr. Spencer in his elaborate work (The Aryan Ecliptic Cycle—p. 200) tells us that in a trance, he was informed by an angel, that Ahura Mazda is Siva. One may not believe in the truth of the information communicated, but the fact that such announcement was made, is indication of what some other minds (human or angelic) think in the matter.

2. Pringle-Pattison The Idea of God p, 137

[When worthier Vishnu approached worthy Indra, for the purpose of coalescence, Vedhas conquered the Aryans of Trishadha and made them participators in Rita (Asha).

सध=सह=together. त्रिषध means the three united states—the confederation of the three Iranian States, Parsu(Persia), Prithu (Parthia) and Madhya (Media).]

The Plain meaning of this Rik is that Visnu evolved out of Indra, and this evolution of Vishnu out of Indra, synchronised with the time when Mazda had conquered the three Iranian provinces.

In other words, Vishnu appeared on the scene about the time when Zarathushtra sang the hymns of Mazda.

To leave no manner of doubt that Vishnu's origin is due to the inspiration of Mazda-Yasna, the Vedic sage gives to Vishnu the name नवीयस् वेधस्—"Neo Mazda"

यः पूर्वायि वेधसे नवीयसे, सुमज्जानये विष्णवे ददासति ।

यो जातम् अस्य महतो महि ब्रवत्, सेदु श्रवोभिर् युज्यम् चिद् अभ्यसत् ॥

(Rig 1-156-2)

[He who brings gifts for the ancient Vedhas (=Mazda), as well as for the high-born newer Vedhas, Vishnu, and narrates the story of the lofty birth of the exalted One (Vishnu), he surpasses his equals in glory. ]

It would thus appear that Mazda-Yasna is esteemable for developing the ideals of Siva and Vishnu. Ahura Mazda stands behind the figure of Siva, and proclaims the need for simplicity. He, Mazda, stands behind the figure of Vishnu and proclaims the need for love. Siva and Vishnu jointly as two Aswins, rule over the land of the Ganges—

युवोर् नराः द्रविणं जहाव्याम्—(Rig 3-58-6)

The two highest gods of Hinduism, Siva and Vishnu (i. e. the ideals represented by them) are the gifts of Mazda Yasna to India, and India cannot be much too indebted to Iran.

It is therefore in the fitness of things that Pour-i-Davood, the poet laureate of Persia, brings back to our mind the long-forgotten story, by paying homage to Siva and Vishnu :

नायद ज्ञ विष्णु जीन बीश निगाहदारीए हिन्द ।

ता के अज बहरे वतन जान पाये शिव नकुनी ।

[Unless you surrender to Siva your life, for the sake of your mother-land, Vishnu would not give to India protection greater than this.]

The attempt at assimilation persisted beyond the Vedic age. The Narayaniya chapters of the Mahabharata (discussed in details previously) is a remarkable instance of the attempt to introduce Ahura Mazda into India under the name of Hari Medhas.

The attempt persisted through the Puranic age. In the Reva Khanda of the Skanda Purana (Chapter 2-4) we find the description of the worship of Satya Narayana. No image is used in the worship, not even the spherical stone (Saligram Sila—representing the Universe) which is the symbol for Vishnu, nor the elliptical stone (vana linga) which is the symbol for Siva. No temple is required for the worship. It is conducted under the open sky. All the people assembled sit together and join in the congregational worship without any distinction of caste. The food offered to the Deity is called sirni (sweets) which is a Parsian word—the Indian word is Naivedya. The votaries of this cult are called Pir (elders) which is another indication of Iranian origin. A sword is used in the service, indicative of the militancy of the Iranian cult.

It is very clear that Satya Narayana is the revised name for Hari Medhas. "Hari Medhas" sounded rather strange to the Indian ear, and so a more familiar name "Narayana" was substituted. This substitution is facilitated by the fact, that in the Mahabharata itself, Hari Medhas is identified with

1. The Iran League Quarterly—April 1933, p. 48 and The Amrita Bazar Patrika March 26, 1933



Narayana. This is how the relevant chapters are called Narayaniya chapters. The spirit of Mazda-Yasna (aniconic worship) was kept on, even though the term Medhas (=Mazda) had to be given up in order to make the worship more popular. Thus the name Narayana comes in and replaces Hari Medhas. But in order to warn the people, that this Narayana is not on all fours with the Upanisadic Narayana, but only a re-adaptation of Hari Medhas, the adjective "Satya" is invariably prefixed to it. He is not mere Narayana, but He is Satya Narayana.

Some scholars thought that this form of worship was borrowed from the Musalmans.<sup>1</sup> But they overlook that the Skanda Purana was in existence in the seventh century of the Christian era<sup>2</sup>. Sultan Mamud set his foot on India in 1019 A.D. It is thus clear that the Indians had borrowed the system before the advent of the Musalmans. They must have borrowed it from Iranians other than Muhammadans. They took it from the Magas described in the Bhavishya Purana. Wilson thinks that "the Magas were the fire-worshippers of Persia settled in India. Subsequently they came to be incorporated in the Hindu society, and designated as "Brahmans of Saka-dwipa" (Scythia)<sup>3</sup>. The Magas described in the Bhavishya Purana had been largely Hinduised for they used to worship the idol of the Sun (Mithra). But the devotees of Satya Narayana kept up the ideal of Zarathushtra. Bhavishya Purana however testifies that there were Iranian settlers in India and there must have been interchange of ideals. The next attempt at assimilation was made by Mahamuni Nanak, after the influx of the Muslims. He saw through the thin veil, and at once realised that what went by the name of Sufism,

1 Akshay Kumar Dutta—भारतवर्षीय उपासक संप्रदाय Vol, II p. 297

2 Vincent Smith—Early History of India p. 22

3 Hodivala—Parsis of India p. 28



was nothing else than the Cisti of the Gatha. He therefore welcomed it as a vedic truth,—the message of the Atharva Veda. To remove the popular mistake that Sufism was a branch of Islam, Mahamuni Nanak founded a new sect, the Sikh Sangat, which would preach a new type of Sufism. This did not think in Arabic categories, and had little to do with Islamic terms. He restored Cisti to its original status as a branch of Vedic religion. This is the great glory of Nanak.

Sat Guru Nanak greeted the Sufis :

सच्चु मिलिया तिन सोफीया राखनकड दरबारी (श्री राग 5-1)

[The Sufis attain truth and enter into the Court of the Lord.]

But at the same time he suggests that Sufism is the cult of the Atharva Veda—The Veda of Atharvan Zarathushtra :

कलिमहि वेदु अथर्वणु हुआ (आसादी बार—13-2)

The Atharva Veda (which is the source of the principles of Sufism) is the proper Veda for the Kali (modern) age.

And he asks the Muslim Sufis to realise that they are following the principles of the Atharva Veda ; only they have changed the name of Khuda to Allah<sup>1</sup>.

कलिमहि वेदु अथर्वणु हुआ

नाउ खुदाई अल्लहु भइया (आसा बार—13-2)

The Brahma Samaj and the Arya Samaj follow in the wake of Sat Guru Nanak. Rammohan Roy and Dayananda Saraswati did not accept the scripture of Mahamuni Nanak (the Adi-

1 The word "Khuda" is Iranian, and not Arabic. Thus the orthodox Mollas raised vehement opposition that if prayer is offered in the name of Khuda, Allah would not accept it, for He does not grant the prayer offered in any language other than the Arabic (Sell—Faith of Islam—P. 184)

It may be noted that Khuda corresponds to the vedic term स्वधा—In स्वधा अवस्तात् (Rig. 10 129-5), Swadha signifies Brahma.

Grantha) but they accepted all his religious principles. This is how Mazda-Yasna exerts its influence on the Angirasa cult even up to the present age.

Let us now turn to the next point, viz the problem of harmony between the Bhargavas and the Angirasas, as two distinct parts of a composite whole. It would appear from Rigveda 1-156-2 quoted above, that the Rishi recommended the worship of both the Mazdas—the old Mazda (Ahura Mazda) as well as the new Mazda (Vishnu). The theme is taken up by another Rishi who suggests that both Devas and Asuras deserve equal worship.

तद् अद्य वाचः प्रथमं मसीय ।

येनासुरान् अभि देवान् असाम ॥ Rig 10-53-4

[I would now utter the best words, which would make the Devas and Asuras equals.]

Another Rishi says that he would do the rites prescribed by both the cults, Deva Yana and Pitri Yana

ये देवयानाः पितृयानाश्च लोकाः ।

सर्वान् पथः अन्तुणाः आक्षियेम ॥

Angirasa Veda 6-117-9

It seems that Kavya Usanas (Usana, the son of Kavi) was loyal to both the cults. He was an illustrious king of Iran, who is mentioned in the Shah-Nama as Kai Kaus (Kavi Kavaus)<sup>1</sup>

He was so ardent a follower of the Asura cult, that the (Indian) Puranas identify him with Bhrigu, the Prophet of Ahura worship.

He however had considerable sympathy with the Angirasas too, so much so that the Rigveda says that he fashioned the bolt for Indra (Rigveda 1-121-12, 1-151-10, 5-34-2).

1 Haug—Essays on the Parsis—P. 278

Some Iranians did not like Usana's fondness for the Angirasa cult and we find that the Minoi Khirad remarks that though Ahura Mazda had made Usana immortal, he lost that immortality by his own folly viz by yielding to the seduction of Ahriman.<sup>1</sup>

Usana however could ignore the opinion of these partisans, for he obtained the approval of the majority of the people. The Rigveda says that by his devotion to both the cults, Usana was able to "stir up" the whole world.

यज्ञं अथर्वा प्रथमः पथस् तते  
ततः सूर्यो व्रतपा वेन आजनि ।  
आ गा आजद् उशना काव्यः सचा  
यमस्य जातम् अमृतम् यजामहे ॥

Rigveda 1 83-5

[At first Atharvan (Zarathushtra) chalked out the path of Duty. Then was born the Vow-Keeper Vena (Rama candra) of the solar dynasty. Kavya Usana practised both together (सचा) and stirred up the whole world. Let us welcome the nectar that flows from the twin prophets (यम)]

[वेन=beautiful. राम=beautiful]

Govinda (Krishna) also upheld the ideal of loyalty to both the cults, and says

यान्ति देवव्रताः देवान् पितॄन् यान्ति पितृव्रताः ।

Gita—9-25

[The Deva Yanists reach the goal, and so do the Pitri Yanists]

And so Govinda expresses his appreciation of Usana, by identifying himself with Usana

कवीनाम् उशनाः कविः

Gita—10-37

[ I am Kavi Usanah of the Kavi family ]

Similarly sage Dadhica whose bones furnished the ingredients for the bolt of Indra, is said to have been sympathetic, both to the Bhargavas (Iranians) and the Angirases (Indians). (Vide Rigveda 1-80-16 and Panca Vimsa Brahmana 100-22)

[ The highest lead however was given by Maha maharsi Atri who held up Rudra as the common God of both the Deva-worshippers and the Ahura worshippers.

यक्ष्वा महे सौमनयाय रुद्रम्,  
नमोभिर् देवम् असुरं दुवस्य ।

Rigveda 5-42-11 ]

The Parsis would worship Ahura Mazda and the Hindus would worship Deva Vishnu. But when they meet together to commemorate the common ancestry, let them do honour to Rudra who is both Deva and Asura.

That is the way to establish harmony. There is supreme worth in both the cults. Deva Yasna is true from one point of view, and Mazda Yasna from another. There is much that one community can learn from the other. Let them do so in common fealty to Rudra.

We thus see that there is in the Rigveda a good description of the rise and development of Mazda-Yasna. We see how a prophet of Persia, to whom Rigveda gives the name of Rama, started a Magha (church) for the worship of Ahura. It spread over the whole of western Iran, while its opponents flourished in the eastern region. There was an attempt at reconciliation, and conversion and re-conversion were frequent. There was also an attempt for the assimilation of Zarathushtrian principles which brought into being the ideals of Siva and Vishnu. A large number of people however appreciated the worth of both the cults and made an appeal to the Indo-Iranians to join together in doing honour to Rudra.



The graphic description of Mazda-Yasna, as distinct from cursory references, justifies the opinion that the Rigveda is an Indo-Iranian scripture. The beginning of Indian literature may be traced even to the time when Indo-Aryans still dwelt together with the Perso-Aryans<sup>1</sup> "While on the one hand the Rigveda fulfils itself in the later history and literature of India, its roots run deep into the Indo-Iranian and even Indo-European period"<sup>2</sup> Bactria was the homeland of the Vasisthas<sup>3</sup> and it is very likely that some of the earliest hymns to Varuna had been composed in Bactria, that is to say, composed by the ancestors of the present Iranians<sup>4</sup>. One may search them out. "Hertel concludes that Afghahistan was the scene of the Rigvedic period"<sup>5</sup>. The Angirasa Veda refers to the worship of Varuna in the land of Iran

अवनीचीर् अपः सृज वदन्तु

पृश्निवाहवो मण्डुका इरिनातु

Angirasa Veda 4-15-12.

[May the shaven sages (मण्डुक) of Iran, with the Scripture in their hands, pray to Varuna for rains.]

A word of comment is necessary in order to understand the import of the above Rik. Prisni is the Upanishad embedded (interspersed) in the Angirasa Veda. It is the gift of Varuna to the Indian Atharvan, the Atharvan who is the friend of Brihaspati,

कः पृश्निं धेनुं वरुणेन दत्ताम्, अथर्वणे सुदुधां नित्यवत्साम् ।

बुहस्पतिना सख्यं जुषाणः, यथावशं तन्वः कल्पयाति ॥

Angirasa Veda 7-104-1

<sup>1</sup> Weber—History of Indian Literature, p. 5

<sup>2</sup> Griswold—Religion of the Rigveda, p. 75

<sup>3</sup> Griswold—Religion of the Rigveda, p. 147

<sup>4</sup> Tilak—Orion, p. 217

<sup>5</sup> Winterneitz—Indian Literature, p. 307

[Prisni is like a milch cow, ever ready with milk. It is the gift of Varuna to Atharvan. One who is friendly with Brihaspati can avail of it.]

Prisni was promulgated by Atharvan Vena (Ramacandra?) who had perceived the universe to be the manifestation of one root principle.

वेनस् तत् पश्यत् परमं गुहा यत्, यत्र विश्वम् भवत्येकरूपम् ।

इदं पृथिर् अदुहज् जायमाना, स्वविंदो अभि अनुषत ब्राः ॥

Angirasa Veda 2-1-1

(i. e. Prisni preaches metaphysical monism)

Prisni is the gift of Varuna to the friend of Brihaspati, just as the Gatha (the Upanishad embedded in the Bhargava Veda) is the gift of Ahura Mazda to Zarathushtra, the Spitama (Gatha 29-8, 32-1, 51-15)

In the verse of the Angirasa Veda (4-15-12) quoted above, the Indian Rishi expresses the desire that the Prisni may prevail in Iran as well (in place of the Gatha).

The Rigveda comprises earlier and later hymns (Rig 3-32-13, 7-35-14). It was composed through several centuries. The earliest hymns are prior to the advent of Zarathushtra, while the latest hymns may convey references to Ramcandra (described as Vena). The present arrangement of the Rigveda (as compiled by Vyasa) is not chronological, so that the age of any particular hymn has to be decided by other factors. The hymns belong to different ages. It is therefore difficult to make a definite assertion about the priority of any Veda as a whole. For instance, amongst the metres used in the Yajurveda, seven are qualified by the epithet Asuri, such as आसुरी गायत्री, आसुरी पंक्ति, आसुरी उष्णिक् etc<sup>1</sup>. Evidently these mantras of the

1. Haug—The Religion of the Parsis p. 271



Yajur Veda were composed after the Bhargava Veda (the Veda of Asura worship) came into existence.

In the Homa Yasht (24) we find the statement that Keresanu (कृशानु of the Veda) prohibited the utterance of "apam aivishtis" in his kingdom. अपाम् अविष्टि is clearly the technical name for Angirasa Veda, for शन्नो देवीर् अभिष्टये happened to be the first mantra of the Angirasa Veda<sup>1</sup>. Thus the Homa Yasht is subsequent to the Angirasa Veda.

A very glaring reference we find in the उग्रमन्यु of the Angirasa Veda (1-10-1). Ugra Manyu is undoubtedly the Sanskritised form of Angra Manyu of the Upastha. For Ugra Manyu occurs only once in the Veda (in this particular passage) while Angra Manyu is ubiquitous in the Bhargava Veda. This shows that the Bhargava is anterior to the Angirasa Veda.

The Rigveda is the earliest book of the Aryans. It is impossible to open any book of Indian subjects without being thrown back upon an earlier authority, which is generally acknowledged by the Indians as the basis of all their knowledge, whether sacred or profane. This earlier authority, which we find alluded to in theological and philosophical works as well as in poetry, in codes of law, in astronomical, grammatical, metrical and lexicographic compositions, is called by the one comprehensive name, the Veda<sup>2</sup>.

It is the book of origins. "For Indian history, religion, philosophy and civilisation, the Rigveda is the book of origins. As prophetic of the lines of future developments, it may also be called a collection of the first fruits"<sup>3</sup>.

The Rigveda is the earliest record of human civilisation. "In the history of the world, the Veda fills up a gap which no literary work in any other language could fill. It carries us

1. Haug—The Religion of the Parsis p. 182

2. Maxmuller—History of Sanskrit Literature, p. 9

3. Griswold—Religion of the Rigveda, p. 5

back to the time of which we have no records anywhere, and gives us the records of the very words of a generation of men, of whom otherwise we would form but the vaguest estimate by means of conjectures and inferences. As long as man continues to take interest in the history of his race, the first place in the books of record will belong for ever to the Rigveda<sup>1</sup>.

The Iranians can be as much proud of Rigveda, as the Indians, for the Rigveda is to a large extent Iranian in origin. Both the Bhargava Veda and the Angirasa Veda are its off-shoot. "Brunnhöfer, the Ishmæl among Sanskritists lays hold of the fact that the roots of the Rigveda run deep into the Indo-Iranian period. It is for him as much an Indo-Iranian as an Indian book"<sup>2</sup>.

The Rigveda does not ignore the Pitri Yana cult (Mazda-Yasna). It gives as much information about it, as of the Deva Yana cult. Nor does it pay less respect to the Bhrigus (champions of Mazda Yasna) than it does to the Angirases (champions of Deva Yana). The Rigveda tells us how the movement started by the Iranian prophet spread over the western regions while the eastern people stuck to Deva Yana. It provides grounds for inferring that the ideals of both Siva and Vishnu are the results of the impact of Mazda Yasna on the Indian religion. It apprises us that Rudra is the God who is common both to Deva Yasna and Mazda Yasna, and even the name of Ahura Mazda (Asura Vedhas) is applied to Rudra.

यथा रुद्रस्य सूनवः, दिवो वशन्त्य् असुरस्य वेधसः युवानम् तथेद् असत् ।

Rigveda 8 20-17

[May that happen, which the youthful sons (devotees) of Rudra, desire—Rudra who is both Deva(दिवो) and also Asura Vedhas.]

When even the name Ahura Mazda (Asura Vedhas) occurs

1. Maxmüller—History of Sanskrit Literature p. 63

2. Griswold...Religion of the Rigveda p. 78

in the Rigveda, it is idle to say that the Rigveda is quite ignorant of the reformation started by Maha Ratu Zarathushtra. The attempt to drag down Zarathushtra to 1000 B.C. is ridiculous indeed.

We may therefore leave out the question of his age and turn to the reasons which led Atharvan Zarathushtra to start a rival movement and a new church. The greatest desire of the holy prophet was no doubt to realise Mazda, to experience God. It was for this purpose that he left home in early youth and adopted a life of austere discipline in the Sabilan hills. When he succeeded in getting a vision of Mazda and communing with Him, it became clear to his mind that a plethora of ceremonies is more a hindrance than a help for getting access to Mazda. He wanted to teach this important truth to the people at large, to make the way of God-realisation easy for them. He was not satisfied with his own salvation only, he wanted to lead others too, safe over the Bridge of Selection (Gatha 46-10). This was the main object of his starting the new Church. But he was prompted also by national considerations. Maha Ratu Zarathushtra did not believe in "telescopic philanthropy" and thought that charity should begin at home (नज़दस्तांम् गण्यांम् Gatha 50-3). He wanted to save the Aryan people who were being frequently attacked by the Turanians (Mongolians) on the north and the Panis (Semites) on the west. The Rigveda refers to the hostility of the Turvasus (7-18-6) and the Panis (10-108-4) and the Avesta speaks of the invasion of the Turanians (Jackson—Zoroaster-Chap IX). Maha Ratu Zarathushtra thought that the Aryan people must be united. They should learn to stand up as one man, if they wanted to resist the onslaught of the aggressive foreigners. He thought of organising the nation,—organising the strength of the village, the province, and the country (Gatha 31-16). Apart from the question, that iconolatry is apt to give rise to a confusion,—the confusion of identifying the icon with God (of thinking that God does not reside outside of the icon),



iconolatry stands in the way of national unity. When each group of people sets up a separate icon as the object of worship, dissension and strife is bound to follow and national solidarity quickly comes to an end. So Maha Ratu Zarathushtra decided that iconolatry must go, at least for the sake of national unity. Similar is the case with caste division. There may be merit in it, so far as it helps to transmit hereditary skill, but there is no doubt that caste distinction is a strong obstacle to the integration of the nation. So Zarathushtra decided that caste division should also be discarded. Maha Ratu Zarathushtra also saw that the people must learn to defend themselves against the enemy before they think of progress and prosperity. So he spoke in praise of militancy. This has earned for Zarathushtra the title of "the warrior prophet" and the Padma Purana went so far as to say that though Parsu Rama is an avatar, he does not deserve to be honoured like the other avatars, on account of his excessive militancy.

नोपास्यं हि भवेत् तस्य शक्त्यावेशान् महात्मनः,

Padma Purana—Uttara Khanda 93-392

It is for us to realise that the view of the Padma Purana is very erroneous. Mahabharata had rightly appreciated the worth of the Kshatriya.

दश-श्रोत्रिसमः राजा इत्येव मनुर् अब्रवीत् ।

Adiparva 41-31

[Manu has said that one Kshatriya is worth ten Brahmins.]

It is through Kshatriyahood that one can reach the status of the Brahmin. Unless one has the power to retaliate, all talk about forgiveness is only a veil for cowardice ; that does not deceive anybody

We should therefore dismiss the opinion of the Padma Purana and appreciate the greatness of Parsu Rama and



re-instate him with all honour which is due to him as the first prophet of the Aryan race. And to atone for the previous neglect we should take up his gospel ( the Gatha ) with as much devotion as we entertain towards the gospel of Ramcandra (the Prisni).

In any case there was, at the time, a crying need for a gospel like the Gatha. For, over and above teaching the the most correct method of God-realisation, it taught the lesson of national solidarity ( as the Aryans were surrounded by enemies on all sides.) The trouble still persists, and so the utility of the Gatha. has not ceased. For the sake of organisation, Maha Ratu Zarathushtra inculcated the lesson of one God ( मज़्दाओ सखारे मइरित्तो, 29-4), one prophet ( अण्म् मोइ इदा विस्तो 29-8), and one Scripture ( यथा इम् मेनाइ चा वओचा चा 45-3), and emphasised the need of militancy ( ये वेरेज़ेनाइ बड्उहीम् दात् फूसस्तीम् 49-7), and the Iranians became such a powerful nation that the whole of western Asia and eastern Africa bowed to them, and the expedition of Marathon and Thermopylae caused terror to the most advanced of the European nations. It is only when the Sassanians took to paying more attention to the rules of the Vendidad than to the principles of the Gatha, that the downfall started.

The reformation of Maha Ratu Zarathushtra brought about a change in the social structure of the Indo-Iranians. The Angirasas had adopted the four-fold caste and the four-fold stage. The Bhargavas stick to one stage (viz. that of the house-holder) and to one caste (viz. that of the Kshatriya). Zarathushtra is the pioneer of the prophets who uphold to man the ideal of a caste-less caste.

It is to be noted that Mahabharata appreciates the view point of Atharvan Zarathushtra when it says that the stage of the house-holder is the main stage—the other stages are subordinate to it, being dependent on the house-holder for their livelihood

यथा मातरम् आश्रित्य सर्वे जीवन्ति जन्तवः ।

तथा गार्हस्थ्यम् आश्रित्य वर्तन्ते इतराश्रमाः ॥

Santi Parva 275-6

[ Just as the babies cannot live without the mother's breast, so the other stages cannot live without sustenance from the house-holder. ]

About the caste-division also, the Mahabharata says that as all people are equally affected by desire and anger, fear and temptation, hunger, thirst and fatigue, there is no sense in dividing them into separate castes.

क्रोधः क्रोधः भयं लोभः शोकश्च चिन्ता क्षधा श्रमः ।

सर्वेषां नः प्रभवति कस्माद् वर्णो विभियते ॥

Santi Parva 186-7

It is to be noted that all the nations of the world have accepted the ideal of caste-equality enunciated by Zarathushtra, first of all. Islam in particular has adopted Zarathushtra's system *in toto*, as it subscribes also to the ideal that the outstanding caste should be of the Kshatriya type (Gatha 49-7).

"Muhammad did not know that he had borrowed many Zarathushtrian ideas. He believed that their source was Jewish and was unaware that the Koran was, so to speak, second edition of the Zend Avesta. It is precisely this lack of originality which favoured the spread of Islam in Persia. Muhammad had not foreseen the great influence which his doctrine would have in the Persians"—Dozy<sup>1</sup>

We find that in the age of the Mahabharata caste system was no longer current in Iran. Salya, the king of Madra (Media) had, at the request of Duryodhana, agreed to serve as a charioteer to Karna. Salya's insinuations against the

1. Claud Field.—, Persian Literature, p. 33

bravery of Karna irritated him, and he taunted Salya by saying that his people had no regard for the purity of caste.

तत्र वै ब्राह्मणो भूत्वा ततो भवति क्षत्रियः ।

वैश्यः शुद्रश्च बाहिकस् ततो भवति नापितः ॥

Karna Parva 46-6

[The Vahika ( Bactrian-Median ) has no regard for caste. To-day he is a Brahmin, the next day he is a Kshatriya, and the day after, he is a Vaisya, or a Sudra, or a barber.]

That the reference is to an Iranian tract ( and not to any province within India), is made more definite by the following passages of that interesting dialogue.

मद्रकेषु च संसृष्टं शौचं गान्धारकेषु च ।

राजयाजक-याज्येषु नष्टं दत्तं हविर् भवेत् ॥

Karna Parva 40-29

[In Madra (Media), there is scant regard for family ties, and in Gandhara (Afghanistan), scant regard for purity. In these provinces, Kshatriyas happen to be the priests, so all their Yajnas become ineffective.]

आबिकं औष्ट्रिकं चैव, क्षीरं गार्दभं एव च ।

तद्विकारांश्च बाहीका, खादन्ति च पिवन्ति च ॥

Karna Parva 44-36

[The Vahikas, (Bactrians) are accustomed to drink the milk of the sheep, the camel and the donkey.]

आरट्टा नाम ते देशाः बाहीकाः नाम ते जनाः

Karna Parva 44-64

[The people are called Vahika (Bahika, Bactrian) and the city is Aratta (Herat).]



A very interesting fact about the sportful relation subsisting between the Indians and the Iranians may be noted here. On account of the frequent use of the term यजमहे (let us worship) by the Iranians, the Indians gave to them the nickname of 'ये यजामहे' (Now we would worship). This is just like the Buddhists, referring to Brahmins as Bho-vadins (Dhammapada 26-14) on account of the frequent use of the interjection भो (Oh) by them. Thus in describing the fact that castelessness is regarded by the Iranians to be perfectly regular, the Mahabharata writes the following sloka

वाङ् मैथुनं अथो जन्म मरणं च समं नृणाम् ।  
इदं आर्षं प्रमाणं च ये यजामहे इत्यपि ॥

Vana Parva 18-5

[All men are equal in speech, marriage, birth and death. The Ye-Yajamahe people consider this (equality) to be sanctioned by the scriptures]

Maha Ratu Zarathustra introduced a remarkable change in the philosophical outlook as well. The force that Rudra employs for creating and dissolving the universe was divided by the Angirasas into three kinds, viz.—Tamas, Satwa and Rajas (i.e. the out-going, the in-coming, and the equipollent force). Maha Ratu Zarathustra saw clearly that the Rajas may not be said to be a separate force. It was merely the state of equilibrium between the action of the other two. And following the principle of 'Occam's razor' he discarded the Rajas altogether. According to him there were only two forces (Manyus),—the Angra (centrifugal) and the Spenta (centripetal). The conception of Zarathustra is more logical<sup>1</sup>

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1. It may be noted that the conception of Angra Manyu as the author of evil, does not operate to assail monotheism, for



and we find in the Rigveda a verse which upholds the two-fold division, instead of the three-fold which became more current later on :

स सध्रीचीर् स विषुचीर् वसानः ।

आ वरीवर्ती भुवनेषु अंतः ॥

Rigveda 10-173-3

[The Lord rotates all along, with His two forces, the Sadhrichi (centripetal) and the Vishuchi (centrifugal), and that is how the universe comes into being.]

In the matter of practice of religion too, there cropped up some difference between the Iranian and the Indian point of view.

Religious discipline falls into four distinct stages.

### 1. Karma Yoga, or Formation of Character.

Gautama identified himself completely with this part. According to him the sole function of religion is to teach man how to conquer the desire for pleasure, and follow the path of conscience.

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both spenta and Angra are the two Manyus ( forces ) of Mazda (Yasna 19-9), and as such both of them are equally under the control of Mazda. Angra Manyu is not less docile to Mazda, than what Iblis or Satan is to Allah, It is worthy of note that both the words 'Iblis' and 'Satan' are derived from the Avesta. Iblis is the Arabic corruption of Diaboles (Daeva-la=देवल), through the Syriac [Margoliouth—Early Development of Muhammadianism p. 261]. Satan is Shedān Sheda (demon of demons) [Casertelli—Philosophy of Mazda Yasnian religion p. 61]. The root सद means to weaken. The word Angra Manyu may not be considered more offensive than Iblis or Satan.

## 2. Dhyana Yoga or appreciation of the Higher Self (Introspecter Self)

This is the discipline that Vardhamana Jina upholds (following the lead of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali)<sup>1</sup>. According to him our consciousness falls into two parts—Mind and Soul (Lower Self and Higher Self). Mind is under the sway of pleasure and pain, like and dislike. Soul is the witness of the functions of the Mind. It is merely a spectator, free of all hankering, and is therefore always blissful. And in proportion as a man disregards the Mind and learns to identify himself with the Soul (as his real self), he becomes more and more blissful. The function of religion is to teach a man how to take his stand on the Soul.

Karma Yoga and Dhyana Yoga are not so much concerned about the problem of the origin of the universe or the place of man in it. The followers of Gautama and Vardhamana think that the call of duty and the joy of the soul, has greater claim on our attention than the abstruse problems about the creation of the universe, or the existence of a creator. Thus both Buddhism and Jinism are sometimes accused of being atheistic.

## 3. Jnana Yoga or identification with Brahma.

Sankaracarya is the typical representative of this discipline. The Universe consists of two substances, Mind and Matter. Both of them spring from a common source. If they had nothing common in them, if they were totally unrelated, there could have been no action and interaction between Mind and Matter. Origin from the same source makes them related to each other. This common source is Brahma or the Absolute. It is the cause of all causes, but is itself outside the realm of causality (Akarana). It is the thing-in-itself, the Noumenon which gives rise to phenomena, the Infinite, which is not exhausted by all the finite objects. The Absolute, The Infinite, however, is not an abstraction,

1. N. R. Brahma—Philosophy of Hindu Sadhana, p. 126

existing apart from the relative and the finite. It expresses itself in and through the finite. Thus the human soul is only an expression of Brahma, the highest expression (as far as our knowledge goes). It is the aim of Jnana Yoga to realise the identity between Jiva and Brahma. If a man forgets the ephemeral world, and lives in eternal Brahma, he is relieved of sin and sorrow, which is the purpose of religion.

#### 4. Bhakti Yoga or Attunement with God through love.

Ramanuja is the champion of this discipline. According to him God is a Person, and not a more Impersonal Entity. As a person, God responds to the appeal of other persons (i. e. His devotees) and is interested in their welfare. One cannot reap the highest fruit of religion unless and until he has an experience of the being of God.

A complete religion should contain all these four stages — normally the first stage leading to the second, the second to the third, and the third to the fourth. The religions of the Veda and the Upastha are perfect, and therefore they provide all the four stages. But while the first and the last stages, viz the call of Duty (Asha) and the Love of God (Seraoshem) are more prominent in the Iranian branch, the second and the third, viz association with the spectator-self (आत्मलभ) and identification with Brahma (ब्रह्मसायुज्य) are more prominent in the Indian branch.

Maha Ratu Zarathustra had a very clear conception of these four disciplines (Yogas), and for their practical implementation, he devised a unique scheme, quite his own, viz the scheme of the Amesha Spentas. That shows what a profound thinker the holy prophet was. He divided the path, of religious journey into seven sections. These seven stations are known by the name of Amesha Spentas (Holy Institutes). "Amesha Spentas" literally means holy immortals, i. e. holy immortal laws. These are the laws of the higher life.

The Amesha Spentas are named as follows :

- (1) Asha (Rectitude)
- (2) Vohu Manas (Conscience)
- (3) Kshathram (Nonchalance)
- (4) Armaiti (Faith)
- (5) Haurvatat (Belief in Soul)
- (6) Ameretatat (Belief in Brahma)
- (7) Seraoshem (Love of God)

Yasht 13-23 counts the number of Amesha Spentas to be seven (इहक्त्त हम्-मनंहो) -taking Seraoshem to be the seventh. Gatha (Yas 32-5) calls Seraoshem to be the highest of all-यस् ते विश्वे मजिस्तेम् शेरओषेम् (Vide also Jackson—Zaraostrian Studies-p.45)

The first three, Asha, Vohu Manas and Kshathram, belong to the ethical sphere (the sphere of Karma Yoga).<sup>1</sup> The next one, Armaiti, is introductory to the higher categories of religion (viz. Soul, Absolute, and God).

Haurvatat belongs to the spiritual sphere or Dhyana Yoga, and Ameretatat to the metaphysical sphere or Jnana Yoga. The seventh Amesha, Seraoshem comes within the scope of religion proper.

Every rik of Gatha speaks of one or the other of the Amesha Spentas, and it is not possible to understand the religion of Zarathushtra without knowing the import of the Amesha Spentas. Let us try to see what they mean.

Religious life starts with Ethics, or the principle of conduct. As a matter of fact non-religious life also has concern with Ethics, for how a man likes to live, and even when he wishes to die, there is involved a choice, an act of

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1. The Path of Asa is the path of Duty. The relation between Virtue and Duty is that of the universal to the particular. The performance of Duty has moral quality only in so far as it is the expression of a virtue. Virtue on the other hand only lives in the performance of Duty (Muirhead—Elements of Ethics p. 190)

preference, and there is thus at the back-ground, a reason for the preference. This pre-supposes a standard, or a theory about the End of life, in reference to which the choice is made, and which gives the value to the choice. It may be that the theory is only hazy and nebulous, it may be that the man is not even aware of having any such theory, but all the same, the theory is there, as otherwise, there could not have been any act of choice at all.

If the standard is conceived as Law, we speak of the conduct, as right or wrong. If the standard is conceived as an End, we speak of the conduct as good or bad.

Rectitude is the central theme of Ethics. For it furnishes the standard which decides whether the conduct is good or bad, or whether it is right or wrong.

At the bottom of the ladder (of the Amesha Spentas.) stands Asa, or Rectitude.

अषा Corresponds to ऋत of the Veda. But अषा also is known to the Veda. ता कर्म अषतर अस्मै (Rig. 1-173-4)

By the idea of Rita (Law) the multiplicity of Nature is reduced to a unity. As the idea steps into the moral sphere, and the multiplicity of gods reflect a single will, it is Asa (Moral Law). This is how in the Gospel of Zarathustra, the conception of Asa serves to strengthen its monotheism "To do the right, because it is right, in scorn of the consequence", is the first lesson that Maha Ratu Zarathustra teaches. But how to know what the right is? Zarathustra therefore lays down the criterion for determining the right. It is the principle of doing to others what one likes that they should do to him. (उस्ता अह्माइ यद्वाइ उस्ता कद्वाइ चीत्—48-1). It was proclaimed by Jesus Christ to be the golden rule of life, and in our days has been established by Kant as the one rule of ethical conduct. This is the principle; whereas the faculty that points this out, is named by the prophet as Vohu Manas. This is the second Amesha. The next Amesha is Kshathram or intrepidity. All people know what the right



course is, but most of them fail to follow it up; because they cannot resist the temptation of pleasure. "We suffer because we sin, and we sin because we fear to suffer" is the tragedy of life. Zarathustra teaches us to get the better of this fear. That is Kshratham. It is the very stuff of the moral life. For there is not much good in knowing what the right is, unless one has got the strength to pursue. Thus Zarathustra is never tired of extolling Kshathram. Gautama Buddha gave to Kshathram the name 'conquest of desire' (तद्नाक्षय) and made this the very foundation of his religion. These are the three ethical Ameshas.

Macdonell says that the Religion of Zarathustra is in a unique sense, the religion of morality. For "this is the only religion in which the work of man is a condition of the victory of God over evil"<sup>1</sup>.

Maha-ratu Zarathustra impresses the supreme dignity of Rectitude, as he says that it is the link which unites man to God

बहिस्ता था, बहिस्ता येम्  
अथा बहिस्ता हजओषेम् ।

Yasna 28-8

"You are the best, and I am the best (there is in me, the possibility of being the best), and through Rectitude the best, I would accord You."

The implication of this beautiful line is great indeed. Zarathustra suggests here that Idealism (the presence of an ideal in man). is the true basis of theism (belief in God). So long, Power and Skill (the power of creating the Universe, and the skill of developing delicate instruments like the eye and the ear i. e. Teleology) used to be put forth as the ground for inferring that there is an Intelligent Being at the source of the Universe. Zarathustra suggests that power and

1. Macdonell—Comparative Religion P. 51

skill are more or less extrinsic to a person. What counts more is his character. A Napoleon or Galileo evokes admiration in us, but a Buddha or a Christ evokes reverence and love. It is only in the philosophy of the twentieth century, that Value (intrinsic excellence) has come to be recognised as the basis of theism. It is a wonder that Atharvan Zarathustra drew attention to the matter aeons ago. Mazda is simply the Best, the lord of the Bihist.

The relation with the Creator of the Universe is to a certain extent extrinsic. The relation with the Sustainer of the moral life is more intimate, almost indispensable for man. Man cannot do without God, if he wants to be more than a machine (if he would allow the creative forces of the Ideal to shape his life). For Mazda is the source of all his ideals. "Man did not weave them out of nothing, any more than he created himself" (Pringle-Pattison)

Ideals lie latent in the human heart and the consummation of the religious life consists in realising these Ideals, i.e. in making them patent in character. In Prophets, the Ideals are found realised to the greatest extent. That accounts for the supreme reverence that they evoke. This is also the reason why the Parsi Gayatri (Yatha Ahu) offers homage to the Prophet (Ratu). A man can attain his highest destiny only by walking in imitation of the prophet. It is thereby that he reaches Mazda, who is the fulfilment of all our ideals.

Religion has been said to be "the call of man to raise himself above himself", and the failure of the Greek religion, is attributed to the humanisation of gods in Greek mythology, (i. e. dragging down God to the level of man, instead of raising man up to the level of God). One can evade this pitfall if he remembers the lofty message of Atharvan Zarathustra.

वहिस्तेम् थ्वा वहिस्ता येम्, अषा वहिस्ता हजओषेम् ।

[Stick to what is best in you. That is the way to realise God.]

Next we go up to fourth Amesha, Armaiti (Faith). It comes from आरे (Yes—cf. वाङ्म् in Sanskrit) and maiti (mind)—meaning Yes-mindedness i.e. the attitude of belief, Armaiti however should not be confused with superstition, i. e. accepting as true whatever anybody may happen to say. It is belief in the words of the Prophets. They are the flowers of mankind, and they spend their whole life in finding out the truth about the existence of Soul and God. It is sheer perversity to dismiss the experience of the very people who alone might give any clue to the solution of the riddle of life. Armaiti asks us to give due weight to the experience of the experts in this science—the adepts, the mahatmas. Yet Armaiti is not blind faith. It is only a provisional acceptance of the word of the Prophet, until one finds for himself the truth of the matter. If after proper experiment, one finds that what the Prophet teaches about Soul and God, is mere fabrication, he is entitled to disbelieve. But the experiment should be conducted in the right manner. This alone is what Armaiti expects us to do.

But what are the beliefs that Armaiti asks us to adopt provisionally? These are Haurvatat and Ameretat—belief in one's own soul, and belief in the world soul.

There is in us the possibility of higher consciousness—a consciousness that is higher than that of the mind. Our mental consciousness is dependent on the help of the sense organs. We cannot see without the eye, we cannot hear without the ear. But the Yogis can. The people who have developed the soul-consciousness have not got to rely on the physical organs. A Yogi can see from here what is happening in a distant place; he can foretell that a certain man will die six months hence. Space and time are no obstacles to him. The Sufis always used to possess such occult powers and the race of Sufis is not yet extinct. Clairvoyance and clair-audience and telepathy are not mere myths, except for those who dogmatically stick to their preconceived notions.

at any cost. Anybody may satisfy himself by witnessing a mesmeric performance, how a medium would eat, at the suggestion of the mesmeriser, handfuls of salt, as if it were sugar. This is how a mind can act on another mind (and his physique too), without taking the help of any physical means. Aurobindo, the greatest Yogi of the modern age explains in his *Life Divine*, how this "Supramental Consciousness" is possible, and how it can be developed. The man who stood first in the highest examination in England, and subsequently shook the very foundations of the British Empire in India, may be credited with at least that much intelligence that you and I have. And Aurobindo believed in Supramental consciousness.

The implication of the possibility of Supramental consciousness is stupendous indeed. If consciousness has not got to depend on the physical organs for its existence, it is possible for consciousness to subsist even irrespective of the physical frame. In other words, the soul can survive death. Thus there is here an inkling of immortality. And Maha Ratu Zarathustra held out this glimpse of immortality, when he divided, for the first time in the world, consciousness into two parts, gross and subtle, (Gatha 28-2, 43-3); in other words, when he pointed out the distinction between Mind and Soul.

But the promise of immortality seems to be unreal until it is shown that such a state is consistent with the scheme of the universe. Maha Ratu Zarathustra analysed the universe and found that there is a fundamental Reality lying at the root of its manifold objects. It is the Eternal Principle wherefrom the universe arises, wherein it subsists and where-to it returns on dissolution. The universe did not spring out of Zero, and if it were a Zero (as some sophists, like the Buddhists of the Sunya-Vada school, are inclined to hold) it is such a Zero that the universe lay latent within it. It is a

Zero pregnant with the universe <sup>1</sup>. It is not a mere void ; it is a positive entity. This is why the Taittiriya Upanishad says that if Brahma would not have existed, the universe would not have come into being, and you and I, and the sophist too, would not have been anywhere.

असन् एव स भवति असद् ब्रह्मेति वेद चेत् ।

अस्ति ब्रह्मेति चेद् वेद सन्तम् एनं ततो विदुः ॥

Taittiriya—26

If one denies the existence of the Brahma (the source wherefrom the universe arose), ipso facto, he denies the possibility of his own existence.

What however is the nature of Brahma ? Is it an unconscious substance like earth, water, or ether, and consciousness evolved out of it, by permutation and combination of its particles ? This is the view of the Materialists. Kanada in India, and Democritus in Greece were materialist.

The Mentalists hold that the original source of the Universe cannot be an unconscious substance. It must be a substance endowed with consciousness. For dead matter cannot develop into consciousness, unless the germ of consciousness, lay concealed within it. "No amount of shock from the external environment, can extract consciousness out of mere matter." <sup>2</sup> The Vijnana Vada School of Buddhism and Berkeley in Europe, may in a sense, be said to be Mentalists.

The Spiritualists go further than that. According to them, Brahma is no doubt a conscious Substance, but the consciousness of Brahma is altogether different from our mental consciousness. The consciousness of Brahma has not to depend on the physical organs or the brain. Time and space cannot restrict its scope. It has therefore been called Supra-mental consciousness. What however is more worthy of note, is that

1. Aurobindo—Life Divine, p. 143

2. Radha Krishnan—Indian Philosophy Vol. I. p. 181



there is no tinge of grief in this super-consciousness. Grief is caused by a feeling of want, and Brahma being the Infinite, nothing is wanting therein. The consciousness of Brahma is always full of bliss. Thus the Vedanta gives to this super-consciousness the name of Ananda (Bliss). Ananda however is often used as another name for Brahma. The Vedanta describes Brahma as Sat—Cit—Ananda. (i) It exists, and therefore it is Sat (ii) It knows that It exists, and therefore it is Cit (conscious). (iii) And this consciousness is full of bliss, and therefore It is Ananda. Aurobindo has stated the enunciation of Sat—Cit—Ananda to be the crowning glory of Vedanta, and Deussen said a bolder conception has not emanated from the brain of man. It contains in a nut shell the whole of the philosophy of creation. It conveys that Ananda (i. e. Brahma) is the source of the Universe, and that Brahma expresses itself in the two modes of existence viz. Sat (Matter) and Cit (Mind=Consciousness). The Panca dasi sums it up.

सद्-रूपम् आरूणिः प्राह प्रज्ञानम् ब्रह्म बह्वृचाः ।

सनत्कुमारः आनन्दम् एवं अन्यत्र गम्यताम् ॥

Panca dasi 13-6

[According to Aruni, the original Substance is matter ( सत् ) according to the Bahvrica School, it is mind ( चित् ) but Sanat Kumara holds, that it is Ananda (or Brahma)]

Ananda is the characteristic element of Brahma. Matter partakes the element of existence ( सत् ), and Mind, the element of consciousness ( चित् ) also. But there is no partner in the element of Ananda (except when a man attains unity with Brahma). Ananda is particularly the own element of Brahma. This is how Ananda came to be identified with Brahma.

The Gatha refers to the Ananda of Brahma, in the words क्षणम् मज्झाओ ब्रह्माई (Yas 53-2)—the Bliss of Mazda, the Brahma.

This significant phrase suggests that Kshnum (Ananda) is the characteristic element of Brahma, and that Mazda and Brahma are the two aspects of the same Entity. This is the highest truth of the Vedanta. That Ananda (Rafedra) is the essential element (Paurva Manyu) of Mazda is expressly stated in Yas 28 1

Some people may deride the idea of finding Sat-Cit-Ananda in the message of Zarathustra. They would have less cause to despise, if for Zarathustra, the name 'Bhrigu' is substituted. For the whole philosophy of Ananda is attributed to Bhrigu, and the relevant chapter (Taittiriya Upanisad 7-3) is called Bhrigu-valli. Thus the Panca-dasi declares that it was Bhrigu (the Preceptor of the Asuras), who first learnt from his father, God Varuna, the secret as to how the whole universe evolved out of Ananda.

भृगुः पुत्रः पितुः श्रुत्वा वरुणाद् ब्रह्म-लक्षणम् ।

अन्न-प्राण मनोबुद्धिम् त्यक्त्वा नन्दम् विजगिम्बान् ॥

Panca dasi 11-12

There must have been a reason, why Ananda is particularly associated with the Preceptor of the Asuras.

Along with the Upanishads, Maha Ratu Zarathushtra gave to this fundamental basis of the universe the name of Brahma (Vahma). And belief in Brahma he called by the name of Ameretatat; for without there being an Eternal Principle at the root, all talk about immortality (eternal existence) is bound to end in smoke. Belief in Soul (Urvan) and belief in the world-soul (Brahma) are the two basic facts of religion. The presence of the Higher self (अधिआत्मा) in every one of us implies the existence of the Universal Higher Self i. e. the Highest Self (परमात्मा). Thus Haurvatat and Ameretatat (as they are called in the Gatha), are two very important Amesha in the scheme of Zarathushtra. The Armenians (before they accepted Christianity) used to adore them as Horat and Morat.

The Jews also honoured them (Midrash—yal kut chapter 14). Islam took them over and described them as angels, under the names of Harut and Marut<sup>1</sup>. Hafiz composes a beautiful song with a pun on their names.

लुत्फ बाशद गर न पुशी अज गदाहा रुत रा ।

ता बकामे दिल बेबीनद दीदहूए मा रुत रा ॥

The identification of the Vahma of the Gatha with Brahma of the Upanishads, may raise strong protests from the orthodox pundits as being a new interpretation of the Gatha, not supported by traditional exegesis. But there was continued intercourse between the two sections of the Aryan people, and just as the word Angra Manyu was borrowed by the Angirasas (and converted into Ugra Manyu—Angirasa Veda 1-10-1) similarly Bhargava Veda might have borrowed "Brahma" from Angirasas. But leaving aside the question of borrowing (based on verbal agreement), the philosophy of Monism, which is represented by the word Brahma, is very patent in the Gatha. Zarathustra prays for the end of all duality (Sukta 48-9). Is there any difference between this, and the philosophy of non-dualism (अद्वैतवाद) which Vivekananda preached in America? And lest this metaphysical monism (अद्वैतवाद) is attempted to be explained away as ethical monism (समदर्शन), the Holy Prophet makes mention of the two matters separately. In Sukta 32-16 there is ethical non-duality (i. e. equality of all man, there being the same Self in all) and in Sukta 48-9, he speaks of metaphysical monism i. e. the assertion that Brahma (Absolute) is the sole Reality—the one Substance of Spinoza. All other substances have secondary existence, being only derivatives of the Absolute. Thus Monism (Adwaita) is a main lesson of Maha Ratu Zarathustra. This could not have been otherwise. With-

1. (i) Koran—2-95

(ii) Blair—Sources of Islam, p. 35, p. 46

out monism as its foundation, monotheism (which is a main creed of Mazda Yasna) also falls to the ground. If the conception of the unity of the ultimate Reality is given up, how can one be sure that the universe was not created by more than one God? Thus the objection that the Vahma of the Gatha does not correspond to the Brahma of the Upanishads, loses much of its force. In any case Zravan Akarna (Yas 13-56, 72-10) represents the same idea, and the conception of Brahma is not foreign to the Avesta. It may be noted that Arsaka or Arask, who flourished towards the end of the Parthian and the beginning of the Sassanian Rule, strongly supported the Zravanic point of view (Adwaita Philosophy) [Shusturi—Outlines of Islamic Culture] We may therefore go up to the next and the last Amesha, Seraoshem, or Devotion. Like the Upanishads, Maha Ratu Zarathushtra does not stop short at Brahma or Impersonal God. He proceeds to Mazda or Personal God. The one is a Principle, and the other is a Person. A Principle goes its own way, unmindful of the effect of its actions on others. Personality has been defined as the capacity for fellowship i. e. to think the same thoughts, to will the same purposes and be moved by the same feelings (Macnicol—The Religion of Jesus P. 15) A Person takes note of the existence of other persons, of their hopes and aspirations, and responds to their appeals. The former is the God of Philosophy, and the latter, the God of Religion. The human heart is not satisfied with a God who is equally indifferent to praise or blame, and who is not moved in the least by the agonies of his creatures. Man is in need of the God who would respond to his prayers and come to his help. Thus Jnana Yoga is not the final word of Maha Ratu Zarathustra. He preaches Bhakti Yoga or devotion to personal God, and this is Seraoshem.

Personal God should not however be considered to be man-made God—the product of his wishful thinking. "A worship of fiction confessed as such, is impossible".

In the Universe there are degrees of perfection or reality a hierarchy of excellence. An animal is a greater excellence than a stone, a man is a greater excellence than an animal, <sup>1</sup> the soul is a greater excellence than the body. The reason being that there is such a thing as goodness, and goodness is found in a higher degree in some thing than in other things'. Objectivity of values cannot be denied. Man cannot make or unmake them. Our sense of value is not a matter of selfish preference or individual desire. "The judgment of value is as impartial, as it is unhesitating. It is as objective in its own sphere, as scientific judgment on matters of fact" "That which is character-less, cannot be said to reveal itself more intimately in one aspect of experience than another."<sup>2</sup> Thus God is not character-less or feature-less like the nirguna Brahma. Justice and Love are His prominent features.

"My consciousness of the Infinite, is in some sense prior to my consciousness of the finite, or in other words my consciousness of God is prior to my consciousness of myself. For how could I be conscious that anything is wanting to me, and that I am not altogether perfect, if I had not within me, the idea of a Being more perfect than myself, by comparison with whom I recognise the defects of my nature"<sup>3</sup>

"The presence of the Ideal is the reality of God within us"<sup>4</sup>. "Man did not weave them out of nothing any more than he created himself"<sup>5</sup> "Man does not make values any more than he makes reality"<sup>6</sup>

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1. The supremacy of the human mind consists in its ability to disown the sway of matter. "Man alone in the whole gamut of creation, can regard matter and its processes as *his ideas*, and thereby transcend the same" ( N. K. Brahma—Philosophy of Hindu Sadhana, p. 44 )
  2. Pringle Pattison—The Idea of God. P. 220
  3. Pringle Pattison The Idea of God. p. 247
  4. Pringle Pattison The Idea of God. p. 246
  5. Pringle Pattison The Idea of God. p. 246
  6. Pringle Pattison The Idea of God. p. 239





It is Mazda who makes the values, and it is Mazda who plants the Ideals in man. "The presence of the ideal in human experience, is as much a fact as any other", and it points to the existence of God as the source of the ideal. This is how Zarathustra is so solicitous for the advent of the Ideal.

कदा मज्दा मा नरोईश् नरो बीशेन्ते (Yas 48-10)

"When, oh Mazda, the Ideal would enter into me" [नरोईश् नरो = the man in men = the Ideal man = the Ideal] That is the sure foundation of theism. For God is the fulfilment of our Ideals. For Mazda does not deceive (Yas 45 4) — He does not fail to give the highest lead. But for Him, we would not have waked up to all that is highest in us.

The experience of the mystics all the world over, attests the reality of the Personal God. Panchadasi, a celebrated book of Vedanta, explains the philosophy of the Personal God, and Aurobindo tells us how Ishwara (Personal God) is the positive aspect of the same Entity, of which Brahma (Impersonal God) is the negative aspect<sup>1</sup>. Both are equally true, and the man of Armaiti would not dismiss the idea as wishful thinking, without making an experiment for himself.

As a matter of fact, Karma Yoga, Dhyana Yoga and Jnana Yoga, all of which relegate Personal God to the background, do not, properly speaking, come within the scope of religion. Religion is relation with Personal God, and it is Bhakti Yoga alone, to which the term "religion" rightly applies. And in the sphere of Bhakti Yoga, one notes with wonder, the profound originality of Maghavan Zarthusstra. When Maha Ratu Zarathustra was born in Iran, the Vasisthas were worshipping Varuna, and the Angirasas were worshipping Indra. Both Varuna and Indra are personal Gods—Gods who responded to the prayers of the worshippers. Maha-Ratu. Zarathustra

1. Aurobindo—Life Divine, vol. 1. p. 40.

disapproved the Indra cult because it encouraged polytheism and iconolatry. He approved the Varuna cult because of its lofty moral ideal. Yet he selected a new name (Mazda—Vedhas) for the God of his religion, because the new Bhakti Yoga that he preached, differed considerably from the current Bhakti Yoga of the Vasishthas and the Angirasas. The previous Bhakti Yoga was naive Bhakti Yoga. It took no notice of the impersonal aspect (Brahma aspect) of Godhead. The new Bhakti Yoga was rational Bhakti Yoga. It recognises the fact that God is both personal and impersonal. He is both Mazda and Vahma.

There is a heated controversy between Sankara and Ramanuja, the two premier champions of the Vedic philosophy, whether the ultimate Reality is impersonal or personal. Sankara held that It is impersonal, Ramanuja held that He is personal. The Gita had suggested a solution by saying that the personal God is rooted in the Impersonal.

ब्रह्मणो हि प्रतिष्ठाहम् अमृतस्याव्ययस्य च Gita 14-7

The idea is developed and explained in the Pancadasi, which says that they are interpenetrated.

अन्योअन्याध्यासम् अत्रापि, जीवकूटस्थयोर् इव ।

ईश्वर-ब्रह्मणोः सिद्धिं, कृत्वा ब्रूते सुरेश्वरः ॥

Pancadasi 6-190

This practically means that the Personal and the Impersonal are the same Being. Aurobindo further clears up the matter by saying that Brahma and Ishwara (Impersonal and Personal Gods) are the negative and positive sides of the same Entity<sup>1</sup>. The existence of Brahma is the necessary implication of the two forces—Centripetal and Centrifugal—being correlative. As the Swetaswatara Upanishad says: Brahma is the third Entity which holds the two forces together. Without there being

1. Aurobindo—Life Divine, vol. 1 p. 40



Brahma to hold them together, these two opposite forces would fall asunder and cease to be correlated, i. e. interdependent-(Swetaswatara 1-7, 1-11, 5-1).

The same inference is suggested also by the Gatha, when it says, (Yas 30-3,) that two forces, Spenta and Angra, are *येसा* (interdependent—in existence), though *खफेना* (independent—in function). Thus Brahma is as much the truth of the Gatha, as of the Swetaswatara; only it is explicitly stated in the Swetaswatara while it is implicitly hinted at in the Gatha. That seems to be last word on the point.

It is a matter of great pride for the Parsis to find that Maha Ratu Zarathustra had offered the solution ages ahead, when he said that He who is Mazda, is also Vahma:

अत् होइ वद्मड देमाने गरो निदामा

Gatha—45-8

This may not be considered as a mere academic discussion which the common man may safely ignore. The solution has stupendous effect on the utility of religion itself. Without a metaphysical basis, i. e. without the conception of Brahma at the background, religion degenerates into superstition. And without a practical application, i. e. without the conception of God as the immediate object of worship, religion remains barren.

It is to the great Super-Prophet of Iran that the whole world is indebted, for suggesting the solution that saved religion from degenerating into superstition on the one hand, and from remaining barren and bereft of influence on human character, on the other.

A Kant or a Hegel only brings out fresh arguments in favour of the truth of the Vedanta, and adds fresh laurels to its glory. And the Gatha is Vedanta par excellence.

The conception of Brahma is as much necessary for the perfection of religion as the conception of God, and the whole trend of the Sufi movement in Iran was to infuse Brahma into

Islam. And so far as Islam adopted the conception of Brahma (the "Hu" of the Masnavi)<sup>1</sup> it submitted itself to Mazda Yasna. Islam also thereby saved itself from the blemish of persisting as an imperfect parochial religion, satisfied only with a partial view of the ultimate Reality.

We are now in a position to appreciate the importance of the system of Amesha Spentas that the Holy Prophet had promulgated.

Starting with Asha or Rectitude, which is the minimum requirement of the civilised man, not to speak of the religious man, it takes us to the highest vision of Godhead both in the personal and the impersonal aspects. Thus Mazda Yasna is the simplest religion, as well as the most profound. And in the scheme of the Amesha Spentas, the four principal Ameshas are.

- (1) Asha—which represents Karma Yoga
- (2) Haurvatat—which represents Dhyana Yoga
- (3) Ameretatat—which represents Jnana Yoga
- (4) Seraoshem—which represents Bhakti Yoga

A traditional interpretation takes the Amesha Spentas to be the Lords of the different spheres of creation such as, water and plant, metal and cattle<sup>2</sup>. This is polytheism in disguise. This does not fit in with the severe monotheism of Maha Ratu Zarathustra. It sins against the omnipotence of Mazda, for the Great Lord is quite competent to run the universe without taking the help of seven deputies. Importation of innumerable deputies (the so-called 'elements') is the feature, that is responsible for the unpopularity of the Theosophic movement founded by Madame Blavatsky.

There are others who take the Ameshas to be the seven attributes of Mazda<sup>3</sup>. There is little sense in reducing

1. सिधबते अल्लाह अस्तु खुमे रं गेहु

(2-1345)

2. Dhalla—History of Zoroastrianism, chap vii

3. Taraporevala—The Religion of Zarathustra p. 82

the number of the attributes of the infinite to seven only. Then again if they are merely divine attributes, beyond the reach of the human beings, a man cannot profit very much by their knowledge. Only if they are also human virtues, a man may strive for their acquisition. Maha Ratu Zarathustra knew them to be the seven assets (cf षट् सम्पत्ति of the Vedanta) that make the vision of Mazda possible. This is why he prays to Mazda for obtaining them (दाइदी मोइ ये गांम् तशो—51-7, स्पेन्ता मइन्यू—47-1) And if we are to reap the best advantages of the Amesha Spentas we would do well to think of them as the seven stages in the pilgrim's progress towards the realisation of Mazda.

Not the Iranians alone; some Indians also made a similar mistake. The Mahabharata describes the seven Amesha Spentas as seven hallowed sages.

ये हि ते ऋषयः ख्याताः सप्त चित्रशिखंडिनः ।

तैर् एकमतिभिर् भूत्वा यत् प्रोक्तं शास्त्रं उत्तमम् ॥

Santi Prava 335—28

There is no harm if we remember it to be merely a figure of speech, as the name of the sage most proficient in that discipline.

The main items of difference between the Indian and the Iranian points of view may here be recapitulated. In social constitution, Iran discarded the institution of caste and stage, and the one caste it established elected the Kshatriya ideal. In philosophy, Iran asserted the two Manyus to be the agents of creation as against the three gunas of the Indian. In theological doctrine, Iran emphasised monotheism and aniconic form of worship. In the practice of religion Iran laid more stress on Karma Yoga and Bhakti Yoga and she devised the scheme of the Amesha Spentas (Holy Institutions) for the achievement of the highest object of religion. Iran's crowning glory was the promulgation of rational Bhakti



Yoga, based on the recognition of both the aspects of god-head, personal and impersonal.

Let us now try to know something about the locality and the life of the premier prophet who promulgated the glorious religion of Mazda Yasna.

At the outset, it would be interesting to note that the complexion of Maha Ratu Zarathustra was very fair. This is the meaning of the epithet Spitama. स्पितम is the shortened form of स्पिततम, whose Sanskrit equivalent is श्वेततम = white-most. The fame of his complexion had spread to India and the Harivamsa describes him (or his duplicate in India, if one so likes) as very fair.

गौरं अग्नि-शिखाकारं, तेजसा भास्करोपमम् ।

भार्गवं रामं आसीनं, मन्दरस्थं यथा रविम् ॥

Hari Vamsa—Vishnu Parva 32-21

As a matter of fact, the whole family was famous for its white complexion. The popular name of Bhrigu, the champion of the Ahura cult is Sukra. Sukra is a variant of Sukla or white. The family was also known for its iconoclastic tendencies. The Padma Purana relates how Bhrigu had dealt a kick on the breast of Vishnu. Zamad Agni was a scion of the Bhrigu family and Parsu-Rama was his son. But Parsu-Rama also came to be called Zamad Agni. In that age, the son sometimes inherited the name of his father. "As a father transmits his qualities to his son, his name is also occasionally transferred; something like a modern surname. Thus Vishwarupa, an epithet of Twastar, becomes the proper name of his son. Analogously the name of Vivaswan is applied to his son Manu, in the sense of patronymic Vaivaswata—(Vala Khilya 4-1)<sup>1</sup>. Similarly Parsu-Rama is sometimes called Bhrigu. "The Bhargavas

1. Macdonell—Vedic Mythology, p. 12

claimed descent from the primeval rishi Bhrigu, and they are also called Bhrigus indiscriminately. Thus Cyavana is called Bhrigu (Mahabharata, 13-51), his descendant Ricika is equally called Bhrigu (Vayu Purana 65-93), and Ricika's grandson Rama Zamadagnya is also called Bhrigu (Mahabharata 7-70-2435)\*1.

Thus we find that Parsu-Rama has indiscriminately been called जमदग्नि (Zamad-Agni), जामदग्नि (Zāmad-Agni) or भृगु (Bhrigu). Zamad Agni and Zarat-Ustra express the same idea. The root Zam (जम) means 'to eat' and Zamad Agni means one who eats up fire. Zarat-Ustra also carries the same meaning. The root जृ means 'to digest' and उज्ज, which comes from the root वस (=to shine), means sun (as the cognate word उषा =dawn, would also attest). Thus Zarat-Ustra means one who digests the sun, i. e. outshines the sun.

The Puranas repeatedly describe these two deeds to be the outstanding feats of Parsu Rama viz. that he extirpated the Kshatriyas and that he killed his mother (at the order of his father). Evidently these two acts of Parsu Rama are to be understood figuratively. For taken in the literal sense, such heinous crimes as genocide and matricide, would prove Parsu-Rama to be an abominable rogue, far below the level of an ordinary man, not to speak of his fitness for claiming the dignity of a prophet. Extirpation of Kshatriyas should therefore be understood, as the extirpation of the Kshatriyas as a separate caste. Parasu-Rama was himself a militant prophet, inspired with the Kshatriya ideal, and it is unlikely that the destruction of the people who cherished similar ideals would be his first business. Parsu-Rama established one caste which represented the Kshatriya type, and thus there was no necessity of maintaining the Kshatriyas as a separate caste for the protection of the nation. Thus the one caste principle of Parsu-Rama practically amounted to the annihilation of the Kshatriyas, as a separate caste. This is

1. Pargiter—Ancient Indian Historical Tradition, p. 193

the meaning of his extirpation of the Kshatriyas. Though the principle of one caste means the abolition of the other three castes as well, the Kshatriyas are singled out in order to indicate the extreme revolutionary character of his reformation, which had scant regard for the Brahmanical hierarchy of the Angirasas.

Similarly the murder of his mother is figurative for Parsu-Rama's championing the ancestral Father cult in religion as against the Mother-cult which was an innovation of the Angirasas. The Mother-cult (conception of God as Divine Mother, instead of as Heavenly Father) was subsequently confirmed by Ramacandra, whose untimely evocation (अकाल-बोधन) of the Divine Mother, is remembered in the annual Durga Puja throughout India. Parsu Rama had opposed the movement at the inception, and therefore Angirasas ridiculed him as a matricide. All the world has accepted the Father-cult championed by Parsu-Rama, and they are all matricides according to the Puranas. It would be our misfortune, if we fail to discover Zarathustra behind the picture of Parsu-Rama. It may be noted that according to the Satwata samhita, Narada learnt the satwata form of worship (i. e. anciconic worship) from Parsu-Rama himself<sup>1</sup>.

From pre-historical times Aryayana (Arya land=Iran) and Arya Varta (Arya region=India) were very close to each other, knitted together by race, by religion and by culture. After their separation, the Sapta Sindhu area was the common platform where the two people freely intermingled. The area covered by the Indus and its seven branches (i. e. Punjab and Eastern Afghanistan) was known as Sapta Sindhu—the land of seven rivers. Five of its branches, viz. Vitasta (Jhelum), Asikni (Chenab), Parusni (Iravati-Ravi) Bipasa (Beas) and Satadru (Sutlej) flow over the eastern tract, and two branches, Gomati (Gomal) and Kuva<sup>2</sup> (Kabul

1. Bhandarkar—Vaisnavism Saivism Etc.

river) flow over the western tract<sup>1</sup>. S of Sanskrit changes to H in Zend, and Sapta Sindhu becomes Hapta Hindu in Zend. Hapta Hindu is profusely praised in the Upastha as the best of all lands<sup>2</sup>. It was shortened by dropping 'Hapta' and gave rise to the name "Hindu" as the designation of the Indians<sup>3</sup>. The area covered the major portions of the Panjab and Afghanistan. This is how Hertel concludes Afghanistan to be the scene of the Rigvedic<sup>4</sup> period. Rigveda gives to Iranian culture the name of Ira (इरा), the Indian culture the name of Bharati (भारती), and to the joint culture of them both, which prevailed in the Sapta Sindhu area, the name of Saraswati (सरस्वती). These three Ideals have been honoured as angelic (देवी), and have been praised together in numerous passages of the Rigveda. We may cite here one of them.

आ भारती भारतीभिः सजोषा, इला देवेभिर् मनुष्येभिर् अग्निः ।

सरस्वती सारस्वतेभिर् अर्वाक्, तिष्ठो देवीर् वहिर् इदं सदन्तु ॥

(O Agni, may these three presiding deities, viz : that of India (भारती), Iran (इला) and Sapta Sindhu (सरस्वती) take their seats here on the grass, along with divine men thereof).

'Saraswati' is the religious name of the river of which 'Sindhu' is the secular name. Sindhu is the general name for a river, and the Sindhu (Indus) being the largest river of the area was known as "the river". On account of its seven branches the Saraswati is described as सप्तथी सिंधुमाता (Rigveda 6-61-10, 7-36-6). Major portion of the Rigveda was written on the banks of the branches of the Saraswati (Indus),

1. Macdonell—History of Sanskrit Literature, p. 141

2. Vendidad—Fargard 1.

3. Chandra Kanta Tarkalankara—Calcutta University Fellowship

Lecture on the Vedānta.

4. Winternitz—Indian Literature, p. 307



and in gratitude for this, people of later ages referred to Saraswati as the goddess of learning—goddess of Veda (knowledge). It is in Saraswata area, that Panini, the greatest grammarian of the world was born. He has been called Salaturiya, for Salatura was the name of his native village<sup>1</sup>. It is now known as Latar and lies about seven kilometres from Und<sup>2</sup>. The rules of Panini govern the Zend as much as they do the Sanskrit. For out of the ten Lakaras (tenses and moods) dealt with by Panini the लृट् form is the normal past-tense in the Gatha, while it is very rarely met with in the Veda. Panini lived in the sixth Century B. C. when Afganistan had become a part of the Achamenian empire, and thus he became familiar with the Upastha (Avesta).

Maha Ratu Zarathustra was born in Western Iran; in the town Raji, now known as Rai, which is not very far from Teheran, the present capital. His father Paurushaspa ( पुरुषाश्व ) was a descendant of the famous emperor Manuchihr. Like Gautama Buddha, Maha Ratu Zarathustra came from a royal family. He has been called the Prince of Raji ( नरेपीश्व ) रजीश्व—Gatha 53-9). He came in the 15th generation after Manuchihr, who himself belonged to the 27th generation from Jamshed, the traditional earliest king of Iran<sup>3</sup>. Yamshed is the shortened form of यमः क्षेतः । क्षेतः comes from the root क्षि क्षयति to rule (Nighantu 2-21). We find the root in परिक्षित्, or परीक्षित् (all ruler) the grandson of Arjuna. Thus Yamshed means Yama, the king. In India, Yamshed is designated as simply Yama, though he is called a king (cf. यमं राजानं वरुणम् अग्नि मन्वारभामहे—the mantra for commencing Pujas). Yama and Manu are two brothers, being the two sons of Vivaswan (Sun). Thus both of them are called Vaivaswata—( वैवस्वतमनु and

1. Maxmuller—History of Sanskrit Literature p, 240

2. Foucher and Hargreaves—Ancient Geography of Gandhara, p. 37

3. Jackson—Zoroaster, the Prophet of Ancient Iran, p, 19



वैवस्वत यम). Vaivaswata becomes Vaivanhato in the Zend<sup>1</sup>. From Yama descended the kings of Iran, and from Manu the kings of India.

Pargiter in his well-known-book, 'The Ancient Indian Historical Tradition' gives the geneological tree of the descendants of Manu. From this it would appear that Ramacandra belonged to the 65th generation after Manu, and Sri Krishna to the 94th generation<sup>2</sup>. As Zarathustra belonged to 42nd generation after Yama, the brother of Manu, he was considerably earlier to Ramacandra and Sri Krishna. This also refutes the surmise of the European scholars that Zarathustra belonged to 1000 B. C. For the age of Sri Krishna (i. e. the Mahabharata war) cannot be dragged down later than 1500 B. C.

Like his spiritual successors, Ramacandra and Sri Krishna. Zarathushtra also belonged to a royal family, i. e. the Kshatriya caste. The caste system had not, however become so rigid in those days. Only in one verse of Rigveda (10 90-12) we find the mention of the four castes. This is how Viswamitra, though born a Kshatriya, could become a Brahmin. This is not a solitary case. We find that a number of Kshatriyas (like Garga, Maudgalya, Priyamedha) become Brahmins. They were known as "Kshatropeta Brahmanas"—Brahmins who came out of Kshatriya stock<sup>3</sup>. This accounts for the fact that though Zarathustra came out of the Kshatriya stock (royal family), Parsu Rama is considered to be a Brahmin in India. It seems that like his maternal uncle Vishwamitra, Parsu Rama also started a Kshatriya and became a Brahmin. The Puranas described the same fact in the reverse way, viz. that Parsu Rama started as a Brahmin and became a Kshatriya.

1. Maodonell—Vedic Mythology, p. 139

2. Pargiter—Ancient Indian Historical Tradition, p. 147-148

3. Pargiter—Ancient Indian Historical Tradition, p. 248

We may remember in this connection the statement of the Avesta (Farvardin Yasht—88) that Holy Zarathustra was the first priest, the first warrior and the first husbandman<sup>1</sup>. The name of the father of Zarathustra was Paurushaspa and the name of his mother Dugdhaba. Something unusual happened at the birth of the child. All children start weeping on coming out of the mother's womb, but Zarathustra began to smile. The tradition was so well known that even the Roman historian Pliny mentions the fact<sup>2</sup>. The laughter is prognostic of the future greatness of this unique child—prognostic of the fact, that this infant will one day teach the people, how one can be optimistic in spite of the hostility of his immediate environment. At the age of fifteen Zarathustra wore the sacred cord (Junnar). In Indian language this is called Nivita. The cord, is called उपवीत—यज्ञोपवीत when worn on the left shoulder, प्राचीनावीत when on the right, and निवीत when worn round the neck or waist<sup>3</sup>.

Serious-minded as he was, young Zarathustra wanted to know what the end of life is, and at the age of twenty, he left his father's house determined to solve the riddle of life. He went over to the Sabilan hills, standing on lake Urumiya in the province of Azarbezan, and took up a life of austerity and meditation. At the end of ten years of intense devotion, when Zarathushtra was thirty years old, he obtained the highest illumination. Ahura Mazda appeared before him and taught him all the mysteries of religion.

Zarathustra now began to preach. He went from place to place and proclaimed the religion that Ahura Mazda had taught him. People listened to him, but were very slow to accept his message. They were very hesitant. Zarathustra disparaged ceremonials (Sukta 39-6) and said that Mazda is

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1. Bilimoria—Zarathustranism in the Light of Theosophy, p. 126

2. Taraporewala—Religion of Zarathustra. p. 28

3. Tilak—Orion, p. 16

accessible though love alone (Sukta 32-1). People were accustomed to ancestral rites, and they did not like any innovation. Zarathustra preached for twelve years, but without considerable success. The brave prophet persisted and at last arrived at the court of Vishtaspa. He was the king of Balkh (Bactria). He was a mighty king and deeply religious, like Asoka, Constantine and Akbar in later days. Vishtaspa greeted the holy prophet and adopted the new religion. Zarathustra was 42 years of age when Vishtaspa and his family were converted to Mazda Yasna. This was a turning point in the history of the Zarathustrian creed. For the conversion of Vishtaspa became the most important news of the day.

Balkh is not far from India, and eminent sages therefrom came to the court of Vishtaspa to refute the religious philosophy of the new church. One such sage was Naidyah Gautama<sup>1</sup>. He can be no other than Nodhas, son of Gotama mentioned in Rigveda (1-60-4 and 1-62-13). Another sage was Changraghacha<sup>2</sup>, which is the Avestic form of Sanskrit Sankhyacharya (सांख्याचार्य). He seems to be sage Panca Sikha, a great doctor of Sankhya Philosophy, next in authority to Kapila, the founder of the school. His position was so high that he was called "the second Kapila".

यम् आहुः कपिलं सांख्याः परमर्षिं प्रजापतिम्

Santiparva 218 9

Panca-Sikha has been stated to be a Doctor of the Panca-ratra (i. e. Zarathustrian) School.

पञ्चस्रोतसि निष्णातः पंचारात्र-विशारदः

Santiparva 218-11

and to have explained the doctrine of Personal God, (as against

1. Jackson—Zoroaster, The Prophet of Ancient Iran, p. 87

2. Jackson—Zoroaster, The Prophet of Ancient Iran, p. 85

the Avyakta i. e. the Impersonal Brahma), before a congregation of the Panca-rataras (five-prayer devotees).

पुरुषावस्थम् अव्यक्तम् परमार्थं न्यवेदयत्

Santiparva 218-12

As a matter of fact Kapila himself has been called an Asuri (addicted to the Asura cult)

असुरेः प्रथमं शिष्यं यम् आहुः चिरजीविनम् ।

Santiparva 218-10

This explains why Swetaswatara Upanisad (which is largely influenced by the cult of Zarathustra) makes a special mention of Kapila.

ऋषिं प्रसूतं कपिलं यस् तम् अग्रे ज्ञानैर् बिभर्ति

Swetaswatara 5-2

This Panca Sikha came to convert Zarathustra but was himself converted to Mazda Yasna. The story of his conversion is told in Changraghacha Nama and Dabistan<sup>1</sup>. The fact is supported by Indian tradition as well, For the Mahabharata describes Panca Sikha to be a Panca-ratra (accustomed five prayers a day) and definitely calls him to be an Asuri (follower of the Asura cult)<sup>2</sup>. Not from India alone, but learned sages from Greece as well, came and became converted to Mazda-Yasna. The story of sage Tianur (or Niyatush) who came from Arum or Rum (Roman Empire) is related in Dabistan<sup>3</sup>. Such brilliant conversions raised very high the dignity of Zarathustra, and with the patronage of Vishtaspa, Mazda Yasna spread far and wide.

Zarathustra was 42 years of age when King Vishtaspa adopted Mazda Yasna. The Prophet lived for another

1. Jackson—Zoroaster, the Prophet of Ancient Iran, p. 85

2. Mahabharata—Santi Parva. 218-12

3. Jackson—Zoroaster, the Prophet of Ancient Iran, p. 89



thirty five years, teaching the nation the best way of god-realisation. People flocked to him wherever he went; but there have been and there always are, depraved men who can ill appreciate the greatness of a great prophet. One such disgruntled knave was Arjaspa, the Turaanian chief, who engaged a murderer named Vritra Kush for the heinous crime. And when the Holy Prophet was saying his prayers in a shrine in Balkh, he was stabbed to death. The death of Holy Zarathustra, at the hands of a felon is as much deplorable as the death of Sri Krishna, at the hands of a fowler. These are the people who put Jesus on the cross.

The Angirasas were the easterners. They predominated in the land of the seven rivers (Sapta Sindhu). They were more familiar with the rivers, a maritime people. Thus in Iran also, they preferred the Mesopotamian area and clustered round the banks of Euphrates and Tigris. Indra is said to have conquered the Panis (Semites) with the help of the Angirasas (Rigveda 10-62-1, 10-108-4).

In the Purusha Sukta we find the following lines.

यस्यमे हिमवन्तो महित्वा,  
यस्य समुद्रं रसाया सहाहुः ।

Rigveda 10-121-4

They describe the boundaries of the Aryan land. It is bounded on the north by icy mountains, on the south by the ocean, and on the west by the Rasa (Ranha of the Avesta=Tigris). The eastern boundary is not noted here.

It thus seems that the Angirasas guarded the western frontier and the Bhrigus, the northern. In any case Rasa formed the western boundary of the Aryan land and Sarama had to cross the Rasa in order to go over to the land of the Panis. (Rigveda 10-108-1). Throughout the Aryan land, the Angirasas and the Bhrigus lived in amity.



Balkh is only four or five hundred kilometres from the border of India. Thus to a resident of Peshawar, Bactria is much more familiar than Benaras. And so the religious movement started in Balkh by Maha Ratu Zarathustra, rapidly spread over to India. It did so under the lead of the Bhargavas.

The three main provinces of Iran at that time were Persia, Parthia and Media. All of them are mentioned in the Rigveda.

Persia :

शतम् अहम् तिरिन्दिरे सहस्रम् पर्शव् आददे Rigveda 8-6-46

[I obtained (as largess) a hundred coins in Tirindira, and a thousand coins in Parsu].

Parthia :

दुर्नाशियम् दक्षिणा पार्थवानाम् Rigveda 6-27-8

(The largess that the Parthians give, is beyond the capacity of others.)

Parthia and Persia (together) :

प्राचा गव्यन्तः पृथुपर्शवो ययुः Rigveda 7-83-1

(The Parthians and the Persians proceeded eastward in search of wealth).

These provinces had largely adopted Mazda Yasna, and an Indra-worshipper feels pained at that.

सं मां तपन्त्य् अभितः सपत्नीर् इव पर्शवः Rigveda 1-105-8

[The Persians prick me always, just as a co-wife does a co-wife].

मूषो न शिश्ना व्यदन्ति माध्यः, स्तोतारं ते शतक्रतो

Rigveda 10-88-3

[ O Satakratu (Indra), the Medians bite your worshipper, just as a rat bites the weaver's thread. ]

Persia, Parthia, and Media formed together a United State which was known as त्रिषध (triad). (सध=सह ; त्रिषध=the three together). The Rigveda (1-156-5) says that as Vishnu evolved out of Indra, Mazda already conquered the United State of Three.

Of these three provinces Parsu was the most important. It gave it's name to the whole country. The Indians called it Parsu, but the Iranians called it Parsa. This is the name that we find used in the Behistan inscriptions<sup>1</sup>. Parsa subsequently changed to Paras and Persia.

The term Parsu was quite familiar in India. It not only denoted the country Persia but also the race, Persians. We find in Panini the rule पर्वादि यौधेयादिभ्यः अन् अजौ ( 5-3-117 ). This means that "by the addition of the suffix अन्, पशु' is changed into Parsava, which means the race of the Parsus". The commentators note that the Parsavas were Asuras (followers of Asura cult), weapon-wielders (militant) and fond of confederation ( Magha )<sup>2</sup>

All the three adjectives point to the characteristic features of the Iranians—particularly the attribute आसुर (followers of Ahura). Thus the rule of Panini confirms the inference that the Parsu of the Rigveda refers to Persia.

We find that many mighty kings mentioned in the Rigveda ruled over Iran. Nahusha and his son Yayati were Iranian kings<sup>3</sup>. Nahusha's defiance of Indra, and his discourtesy towards the Brahmins, is narrated in every Purana. Yayati had married in the family of the Bhrigus. Raji was the brother of Nahusha. It is not unlikely that he had

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1. Hodivala—Parsis of Aneient India, p. 3

2. Devendra Vidyaratna—Panini, p. 341

3. Bannerjee Shastri—Asura India p. 87

founded the city of Raji (the birth place of Maha Ratu Zarathustra). Raji is said to have been killed by Indra (Rigveda 6-26-6) which implies that he was an opponent of the Indra cult. King Kasu ruled over Cedi (Bactria), and he made a gift of one hundred camels to the sage Brahmatithi, son of Kanva (Rig 8-5-36). Bactria is famous for her camels, and it is there that gift of a hundred camels is possible. The adjoining province of Khorasan derives its name from king Kuru Sravana who ruled there in the Vedic days. (कुरु श्रवणम् आश्रयि राजानम् त्रयस्त्रयम् Rig 10-33-4). The current explanation of the name, as the rising place of the sun (Khur), is fanciful. Puru-Ravas was the king of Afghanistan<sup>1</sup>, and Cayamana was the king of Parthia<sup>2</sup>.

Eminent Vedic sages lived within the bounds of Iran. When Zarathustra came into the world, Varuna was the name of the highest God of the Indo-Iranians, Atharvan Zarathustra changed the name to Vedhas (Mazda). Vasishthas were the special guardians of the worship of Varuna<sup>3</sup>. It is said that Bactria was the homeland of the Vasishthas<sup>4</sup>.

Zarathustra himself belonged to the family of the Bhrigus (Spitama of Avesta, and Sukra of the Puranas, both meaning 'White'). Zarathustra refers in the Gatha (48-10) to the iconolatriy of the Angirasas. Thus there can be no doubt about the existence of the Vasishthas,<sup>5</sup> Bhrigus and Angirasas in Iran. The great sage Kashyapa lived in the Caspian area and it is from him that the Caspian sea derives its name. The eminent sage अत्रि of which family दत्त आत्रेय is the most famous

1. बटव्याल—वेद प्रवेशिका—p. 16

2. Rigveda—7-18-8

3. Griswold—The Religion of the Rigveda, p. 112

4. Historians' History of the World, Vol. II p. 567

5. Is there a pun on the word Vashishtha, so that we find a reference to the Vasishthas in Yasna 28-8: वहिश्तेम् ध्वा वहिश्ता येम् ?



member) is said to have been the priest of the हैहय s (Hyonians or Turanians)<sup>1</sup>. Thus he also lived on the borders of Iran.

The legend of the fight with Vritra was the common heritage of both the Indians and the Iranians. It is the main feat of Indra in the Rigveda, and the Gatha (44-16) also claims the glory for Mazda.

If illustrious kings like Nahusha and Yayati, Puru-Ravas and Cayamana ruled in Iran, and famous sages like Vasishtha, Bhrigu and Angirasa flourished in Iran, then the Rigveda is as much Iranic, as it is Indian. In other words, the history of Iran starts with Rigveda, the oldest book of the world, and the age of Zarathustra must be considerably earlier to 1000 B. C. There is no justification for rejecting the history furnished by the Rigveda. It is evident that in the Vedic age the Indians and the Iranians lived as one people, in spite of the one wing following the Pitri Yana, and the other wing the Deva Yana cult. It would not be surprising if some of the hymns of Varuna had been composed in Iran<sup>2</sup>, i. e. by the forefathers of the present day Sufis of Iran. It is their glorious heritage.

We have seen how in the Vedic age there was in Cedi (Bactria) a king named Kasu. He had made a gift of one hundred camels to Brahmatithi, son of sage Kanva (Rigveda 8-5-37). Kasu had a son by the name of Vasu. He was a great king, and was also known as Uparicara Vasu, because he possessed an air-ship which enabled him to fly in the skies<sup>3</sup>. This Vasu is no other than King Vishtaspa of the Avesta. The Mahabharata narrates how a new Veda (the Bhargava Veda) was composed in his time, at the inspiration of seven

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1. Pargiter—Ancient Indian Historical Tradition, p. 228

2. (i) Griswold—Religion of the Rigveda, p. 75

(ii) Tilak—Orion, 7

3. Pradhana—Chronology of Ancient India, p. 62

Amesha Spentas<sup>1</sup>. This Vedic age is, in the Puranas, given the name of Satya Yuga.

Let us now look to the next age, the Treta Yuga, i. e. the age of the Ramayana. We find that in this age, Dasharatha king of Ayodhya had married Kaikeyi, the daughter of Ashwapati, the king of Armenia. Kekaya means the Caucasus region, which included Armenia and Asia Minor. The inference is not based merely on the similiarity of the sounds between Kekaya and Caucasus. If we trace the route that the officers took in going to Kekaya, in order to bring back Bharata, on the sudden death of Dasharatha, we find that they had to proceed further northwest after crossing Bahlika. That Ashwapati had a fine breed of horses, which he presented to Bharata, is also suggestive. For the Iranians were famous for equestrian art<sup>2</sup>. (In the next age, we find Salya, the king of Madra (Media) being praised for efficient horsemanship). When Ayodhya and Armenia enter into matrimonial alliance, there is little doubt that the people were socially one people.

The next age is the Dwapara age. i. e. the age of the Mahabharata. We find therein that almost all the allies of Duryodhana were Iranians. These were (1) Kekaya the king of Armenia (2) Salya, the king of Media (3) Sudakshina, the king of Kamboja (Khorasan) (4) Subala, the king of Gandhara (Afghanistan) (5) Dhrista Ketu, the king of Cedi (Bactria) and (6) Jayadratha, the king of Sindh<sup>3</sup>. Is there any marked difference between them, and Drupada, Virata, Yudhamanyu and other Indian kings?

All the three brothers, Dhrita-rashtra, Pandu, and Vidura had married Iranian brides. Gandhari, the wife of Dhrita-

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1. Mahabharata Santi Parva, 335-28

2. Vaidya—Vedic India p. 294

3. Vaidya—Vedic India, p. 19



rastra, undoubtedly came from Kandahar. And when Madra ascended the funeral pyre of her husband Pandu, the other co-wife Kunti, addressed her as Vahliki, a daughter of Bactria.

धन्या त्वमसि बाहिलकी मत्तः माग्यतरा तथा

Adiparva, 125-11

She is called a Vahliki, because Madra (Media) and Vahlaka (Bactria) happened to be sister provinces. Vidura's wife is definitely called Parasavi—a Persian girl.

अथ पारसवीम् कन्याम् देवकस्य महीपतेः ।

बिवाहम् कारयामास विदुरस्य महामतेः ॥

Adiparva, 114-12

The Mahabharata definitely refers to the custom of exposing the dead body (instead of burning it) as an Iranian custom. When the Pandavas decided to live incognito within the kingdom of Virata, they hung up the bundle of their arms on a tree. A corpse was also placed along with it in order to mislead the people. Nakula who hung up the corpse explains it as being consistent with "the custom of our people"

कुलधर्मो अयं अस्माकं पूर्वोऽर्चाचरितोऽपि च ।

Virat Parva, 5-33

By "our people" Nakula means his maternal relatives—the people of Madra or Media. Karna ridicules Salya, the king of Media, as the ruler of a people who are casteless and riteless, and given to drinking the milk of camels and asses. He also mentions Herat (आरुद्र) as the chief city of Media.

आरुद्रा नाम् ते देशा, नष्टधर्मा न तान् ब्रजेत् ।

ब्राह्मणानां दाशमीयानां, बाहिकानाम् अयज्वनाम् ॥

Karna Parva, 44-32

Not even in the Dwapara age were the Iranians and the Indians considered to be strangers to each other. It was in this age ( 14th century B. C. ) that Indra was being worshipped in Asia Minor, as the Boghaskui inscription tells us<sup>1</sup>. It was in this age ( 15th century B. C. ) that "Assara Mazas" came to be worshipped by the Semitics, as Hommel's discovery of Assyrian records informs us<sup>2</sup>. It was in this age ( 16th century B. C. ) that there reigned in Iraq a king named Dasaratha as the Tel-el-Amarna tablet attests<sup>3</sup>. All these facts point to the unity of the Indo-Iranians and their supremacy.

Let us now turn to the Kali age, or the historical age—the age that started at the close of the great Mahabharata war. The battle of Kurukshetra left the Kurus very weak. The Nagas established themselves at Taxilla and attacked Hastinapur. Parikshit, the Kuru king was killed by them. Janamejaya made peace with them. But the Kurus became weaker day by day, and they found it difficult to live with dignity in Hastinapur. One branch of the family moved 300 miles to the south-west and made Kausambi their new capital<sup>4</sup>. Another branch shifted far westward to Persia, and established at Ansan a great empire which subsequently became known as the Achaemenian Empire. The most powerful emperor of this line is known by the ancestral name "Kuru". We are familiar with its Greek version "Cyrus", and fail to recognise that he is no other than a scion of the Kuru family. In the

I. Griswold—Religion of the Rigveda p. 71

2. Moulton—Early Religious Poetry of Persia p. 73

3. Bloomfield—The Vedic Religion p. 22

4. (i) Pargiter—Ancient Indian Historical Tradition p. 285

(ii) Historian's History of the World, vol. II p. 478

Iranian inscriptions his name appears as Kuru (कुरु), and in Hebrew literature as "Koresh"<sup>1</sup>. He is recognised as the first great emperor of historical times<sup>2</sup>. Kuru subdued Croesus the Greek king of Lydia, and became suzerain over the whole of Asia Minor. In 538 B. C. he defeated Nabonidas, the son of Belthesar, and wrested from him the Babylonian empire.<sup>3</sup> Cambyss the son of Kuru had conquered Egypt. Kuru had planned the conquest of Europe and the expedition against Greece was carried out by his successors Darius (दर्यावाहु) and Xerxes (क्षयावर्ष)<sup>4</sup>. The Bible mentions the name of Kuru with great respect. He has been called there a Masiakh<sup>5</sup>,—the anointed (elect) of God. This it did because Emperor Kuru saved the Jewish religion from extinction. Nebuchandnezzar, the emperor of Babylon, had conquered Palestine and razed to ground the central shrine of Jerusalem. He took away all the leading Jews to Babylon and kept them captive. The Jewry then was a very small community and the likelihood of its existence as a separate cultural unit, seemed very gloomy. Emperor Kuru, however, came to their rescue. After he had conquered Babylon, Kuru gave the Jews permission to go back to Jerusalem. His successor Darius allowed the Jews to rebuild their temple. And under the guidance of Prophets like Ezra and Nehemia, Judaism obtained a new lease of life and revived<sup>6</sup>. This happened about the middle of the sixth century B. C. The Mahabharata war is said to have taken place in the 15th century B.C. Thus roughly about a thousand years after the Mahabharata war the Kuru dynasty again came into limelight. But this time it flourished, not in India but in Iran.

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1. Haug—Religion of the Parsis p. 4
  2. Wells—A Short History of the World p. 75
  3. Ahi—Outlines of Persian History p. 29
  4. Sykes—Persia p. 10
  5. Haug—Religion of the Parsis p. 4
  6. Macdonell—Lectures on Comparative Religion, p. 219

The contemporary of Persian Kuru in India was Vatsa, the famous king of Kausambi (550 B.C.). He was the 25th successor of Parikshit, the grandson of Arjuna<sup>1</sup>. Thus we can form an idea of the time that passed between the Mahabharata war and the exploits of the new Kuru (Cyrus). Political importance in India had, however, shifted further east, and Bimbisara became the most famous king of the period. By this time Gautama Buddha appeared on the scene.

Darya Vahu (Darius) was a worthy descendant of emperor Kuru. In the Behistan inscriptions, we find Darya Vahu describing himself in the following words.

अजेम् दर्यावाहु, क्षत्रियो वजूक, क्षत्रियो क्षत्रियानाम, क्षत्रियो दख्युनाम्<sup>2</sup>

(I am Darya Vahu, a great Kshatriya, the Kshatriya of all Kshatriyas, the Kshatriya of all countries.)

We hear in this proclamation the proud voice of Duryodhana, the predecessor of Darius, in the Kaurava dynasty of India. This proclamation is very important indeed, in the history of Indo Iranian compact. Unfortunately its importance has not been fully realised by our historians. Firstly, the language of this inscription is not much different from the language of Ashoka's inscription. That would show that even up to that period, the Indians and the Iranians spoke the same language, though the script was different. This lends support to the assertion of Bartholomae, that Sanskrit was once the spoken language of Iran<sup>3</sup>. This is a very reasonable inference. Even in Shahnamah, which was composed three hundred years after the battle of Nahavand, 95% of the words are Sanskritic (Browne—Literary History of Persia—vol 2, page 146). Muslim occupation of three

1. Historians History of the World...vol. II, p. 478

2. (i) Ahl — Outline of Persian history, p. 11<sup>1</sup>

(ii) Browne—Literary History of Persia, vol. I, p. 62

3. Darmesteter —Zend Avesta (part I) Introduction, p. xxi.

hundred years did not operate to sever the connection with Sanskrit to any appreciable extent. Only the script used was Arabic in place of Zend. The rock edicts of Ashoka are found written in two distinct scripts : the Brahmi, written from left to right and the Kharoshthi, written from right to left<sup>1</sup>, but the language is the same. Similarly the scripts used by the Indians and the Iranians were different but the language continued to be the same. Secondly, Darya Vahu<sup>2</sup> calls himself a "Kshatriya". This points unmistakably to his kinship with India. The military caste in Iran, is named in the Gatha as Verejena, and in other portions of the Avesta, as Ratheshtar. That Darya Vahu declares himself to be a Kshatriya, rather than a Verejena or Ratheshtar, is calculated to attest that the imperial Kurus of Persipolis (Achaemenians) retained the memory of the imperial Kurus of Hastinapur.

In 490 B. C. Darya Vahu crossed the Hellespont and attacked Greece. Ten years later his son Kshyarsha (Xerxes) repeated the adventure. On both the occasions Greece escaped defeat, but escaped very narrowly. The story of the defence of Marathon and Thermopylae is on the lips of every schoolboy in Europe.

In order to wipe out the disgrace of Marathon and Thermopylae, Alexander the Great, in 336 B. C., led an expedition against Iran with a huge army. The monarch who ruled over Persia at that time was also named Darius. He was defeated and killed. In 330 B. C. Iran lost her independence and the dynasty of Kuru came to an end. A Puru was then ruling over Panjab. He offered a stubborn resistance to Alexander. Alexander decided to return to Greece, but on his way back he died in 323 B. C. In 321 B. C. Candragupta snatched a portion of Afghanistan from the

1. Vincent Smith—Early History of India p. 154

2. It is interesting to note that "long armed" ( Darya Vahu = Dirgha Vahu) is an apithet of king Raghu of the Solar race.



successors of Alexander. Candragupta's capital was at Pataliputra in eastern India, which is a long way from Persia and the intercourse between the two countries became a bit slack. It became brisk again through the enterprise of the Buddhist missionaries. Monasteries were built all over Bactria and a large number of Viharas existed there up to the time of the Muhammadian conquest. (651 A. D.)<sup>1</sup>. About 250 A. D. we find Apostle Mani, the great reformer of Sassanian Iran, trying to make a synthesis of Zoroastrianism and Buddhism<sup>2</sup>.

Indian religion attracted the Greek inhabitants of Bactria. King Menander became converted to Buddhism and Heliodorus the ambassador (at Taxila), of Bactro Greek king Antralkides, was converted to Vaisnavism<sup>3</sup>. It is reasonable to suppose that many other Greeks were converted to Zarathushtrianism. Thus Bactria continued to serve as the common platform for the intermingling of Indian and Iranian religions during the predominance of Bactrian Greeks.

Greek power was wiped out by the Parthians, and Iran again became free in 250 B. C. when Arsaces ascended the throne of Parthia<sup>4</sup>. The Parsis are mentioned in the Visnu Purana and the Code of Manu. These books were composed about 300 B. C. Thus they furnish evidence of Indo-Iranian intercourse during the Parthian period (250 B.C.—226 A.D.).

In 226 A.D. Ardshir Babekan defeated Ardawan the last Parthian King and founded the Sassanian Empire. Sassanians were zealous Zarathustrians and Iran got back the glory of Achaemenian days. There is an elaborate description of the Magas in the Bhavishya Purana (Brahma Khanda). It mentions the four books of the Avesta and gives a description

1. Geiger — Civilisation of Eastern Iranians, vol II, p. 170

2. Browne — Literary History of Persia, vol. I p. 164

3. Bhandarkar — Vaisnavism and Saivism p. 4

4. Benjamin — Persia, p. 156

of the Kusti (Abhyanga) and the Sudreh (Kanchuka) and it notes the name of the Prophet as Jarasabda<sup>1</sup>.

The reference undoubtedly is to the religion of Parsis, but it is far from being a correct account of true Mazda-Yasna. For it fails to give prominence to the characteristic feature of Mazda Yasna, viz. its monotheism, aniconism and caste-equality. The description of the Bhavishya Purana agrees more with the corrupt religion of the Yashtas than with the religion of the Gatha. A more representative account of Mazda-Yasna will be found in the Reva Khanda of the Skanda Purana. The worship of Satya Narayana inculcated there, is nothing but an adaptation of the worship of Mazda. Ahura Mazda is named Hari Medhas in the Mahabharata, and Satya Narayana in the Skanda Purana. For Hari Medhas is not different from Hari, and Hari is no other than Narayana. The Skanda Purana was existent in the 7th century of the Christian era<sup>2</sup>. Thus it was compiled in a period which is prior to the advent of the Muslims in India or Iran. Very likely it bears witness to the intercourse of Indian and Iranian religions during the Sassanian period (226-642 A.D.)

There are other evidences of such compact. Behram Gor the Sassanian king (423-438 A.D.) had conquered a portion of India<sup>3</sup>. 'Gor' means wild ass, and the origin of the Gardavilla dynasty of Malwa is traced to him.

It is said that Behram Gor had married a Hindu princess named Sapiduna and that he paid a visit to the king of Kanauz (A.D. 436). He introduced Indian music and literature into Persia. It was under the Sassanians that the Persians brought chess and 'Arabian Nights' from India<sup>4</sup>.

1. Hodivala — Parsis of Ancient India, Chap. X

2. Vincent Smith — Early History of India, p. 22

3. Hodivala — Parsis of Ancient India, p. 7

4. Hodivala — Parsis of Ancient India, p. 21

On the other hand Skanda Gupta conquered a portion of the territories of Piroj, son of Yazdigird II (457—484 A.D.)<sup>1</sup> and king Khushru II of Persia received an embassy from king Pulakesin II of Deccan in 625 A.D.)<sup>2</sup>.

The intercourse persisted even after the Muslim conquest. "The black-eyed and olive coloured Hindus were brushing their shoulders against those of the Muslims in the city of the Khalifs (Baghdad)"<sup>3</sup>.

The Raghuvamsha, the Mudra-Rakshasa and the Katha Sarit Sagar make mention of the Persians<sup>4</sup>. These books were composed in the 5th and 6th century A. D. The reference therefore relates to pre-Muslim (i. e. Sassanian) Iran.

While the Sassanians were on the throne of Persia, power had shifted in Europe from Greece to Italy, and when Jesus Christ was born, we find Palestine and Mesopotamia in the possession of the Romans. The Sassanians now came in conflict with the Romans, just as the Achaemenians had done with the Greeks. In their war against the Europeans, the Sassanians achieved greater success and Shahpur I, the son of Ardshir, inflicted a staggering blow on the prestige of Rome by capturing the Roman Emperor Valerian<sup>5</sup>.

The most famous of the Sassanian Emperors was Naushirvan (Anushir-Ravan). He ruled from 531 to 578 A. D. Arabia then was a province of the Persian Empire and its Satrap ruled over Arabia with his head quarters at Yemen<sup>6</sup>. Hazrat Muhammad was born in Arabia in 570 A. D. He always used to take pride in the fact that he was born during the reign of Naushirvan, the Just<sup>7</sup>.

1. Hodivala—Parsis of Ancient India, p. 7
2. (i) Hodivala—Parsis of Ancient India, p. 22  
(ii) Vincent Smith—Early History of India p. 384
3. Tarachand—Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, p. 66
4. Hodivala—Parsis of Ancient India, Chap, 2
5. Sykes—History of Persia, p. 32
6. Browne—Literary History of Persia, vol. I p, 183
7. Browne—Literary History of Persia, vol I, p. 166

At this time there sat on the throne of Constantinople, the (Byzantine) Roman Emperor, Justinian. His predecessor Emperor Constantine, had adopted the Christian faith (337 A. D.). By the time of Justinian (527 A. D.) the Greeks had become very semiticised in religious outlook. The zeal of the new convert inclines him to look down on all national institutions and under-rate ancestral heritage—a scene which we will soon find enacted in Iran as well. Semitic narrowness taught Justinian not to attach any worth to the philosophies of Socrates, Plato, or Aristotle. Khalifa Omar, when the magnificent library of Alexandria was burnt down under his orders, is said to have argued like this. The Koran alone suffices for the redemption of mankind. If the books of the library are consistent with the Koran, they are redundant. If they are inconsistent with the Koran, they are pernicious. In any of the alternatives, they deserve to be destroyed<sup>1</sup>. Justinian also argued like Omar, that the Bible alone suffices. He therefore broke up the university of Athens. Diogenes, Simplicius, and other learned professors of the university were helpless against the fanaticism of the semiticised monarch. They fled to Iran. Naushirvan gave them asylum<sup>2</sup> and founded at Jund-i-Shapur a university for the cultivation of Greek Philosophy<sup>3</sup>. This great emperor was an admirer of Indian culture as well. He got the Pancha Tantra translated from Sanskrit into Pahlavi<sup>4</sup> and introduced the game of Caturanga (chess) from India into Iran<sup>5</sup>. The sassarians were zealous followers of Mazda. They hold Mazda-Yasna to be the only good religion (aibaka Dina'), and disparaged the Jewish religion (kes-i

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1. Levy—*Persian Literature*, p. 16

2. (i) Andre Servier—*Islam and the Psychology of the Musalman*, p. 222

(ii) Iqbal—*Development of Persian Metaphysics*, p. 21

3. Browne—*Litarary History of Persia*, vol. I, p. 167

4. Macdonell—*History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 417

5. Browne—*Literary History of Persia*, vol. I p. 110

Yihud), the Christean religion (the religion of Kilieya or Tarsak Dina), the religion of Mani, and the Greek religion (the dina of Arum or Rome). The fact that all these religions differed from each other, confirmed his belief in Mazda Yasna (as the safeguide)<sup>1</sup>.

Thus the catholicity of Naushirvan served to bring together on the sacred soil of Iran, the two wings of the Aryan culture, Eastern and Western (Indian and Greek) with the Iranian in the middle as its main prop. May we not hope that this glorious history would repeat itself?

But though the mill of God grinds slow, it grinds exceeding small.

नीस्त घम गर दयर बी उ मान्देह इ

दयर गीर ओ सखतगीरश खान्देइ इ

Masnavi, 2-2532

Iran had to pay the penalty for the brutal murder of Apostles Mani and Mazdak.

Ten years after the death of Hazrat Muhammad, Omar, the second Khalifa sent his general Noman to lead an expedition against Iran. Yazdigard, the last Zaratushtrian emperor, lost the battle of Nahawand in 642 A.D. and Iran fell a prey to the hordes of Arabs. The country of Kuru, the earliest emperor of the world, the land of Darius and Xerxes who led expeditions against proud Europe, the motherland of Shahpur, who had captured the Roman Emperor Valerian, laid low at the feet of the rugged Beduin. Avesta was supplanted by the Koran, and the Muezzin's call was heard all over Persia.

आन कस के बेहराम दौरे जाम गीरफ्त ।

खेहू बच्चे कर्द ओ शेर आराम गीरफ्त ॥

Omar Khayyam.

[The palace wherein Behram Gor used to drink the cup, became the haunt of jackals and hyenas.]

1. Casertelli—The Philosophy of Mazda Yasnian Religion p. 172



By the grace of Mazda, however, the religion of Zarathushtra escaped, total extinction. It is a wonder how a few families survived and still survive in the towns of Yezd and Kerman. Some others left their motherland and took shelter in India. Some of them came by the land-route and some by the sea. Mazda alone knows what untold hardships these persecuted people underwent for the protection of their ancestral faith. The whole world is indebted to these zealous devotees whose suffering and sacrifice, enable all the nations to hear the exalted voice of the earliest Prophet again. If not for the intrinsic worth of this noble scripture, at least out of grateful remembrance of the anxieties and agonies of his forefathers, the Parsi youth ought to take up the Gatha in his hands. He should not allow this noble treasure, for which his forefathers gave their life, pass into oblivion, by his own negligence. The Parsis of India (and through them the Hindus too) maintained some sort of connection with the Zarathustrians of Iran. Thus the commerce between the two branches of the Vedic religion did not come to a dead stop.

The Zarathustrians left Iran in the beginning of the 8th century. The first fire temple in India is said to have been built at Sanjan in 720 A. D. <sup>1</sup> Some Parsis engraved their Pahlavi signatures as witnesses to a copper plate grant in South India, about 850 A. D. <sup>2</sup> Mardan Farukh (son of Ahur Mazda-dad, the author of Sikand Gumanik Vijar) came to India by the middle of the ninth century.<sup>3</sup> Certain Parsis visited Kanheri Buddhist caves at Salsette (near Bombay) in 1021 A. D. <sup>4</sup> In 1031 Ananta Dev, ruler of Konkan granted some

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1. Paymaster—Kisse-i-Sanjan, Preface, p. 12

2. Hodivala—Parsis of Ancient India, p. 52

3. Hodivala—Parsis of Ancient India, p. 52

4. Browne—Literary History of Persia, vol I, p. 103

drammas to the 'Kharasan Mandali' (Parsi Anjuman)<sup>1</sup>. About 1201 A. D. Nairiyosang Dhaval translated the Yasna into Sanskrit<sup>2</sup>. Comparative philology (which establishes the identity of the Hindu-Parsi cult) had not yet come into existence, and thus the interpretation is to a certain extent out of date. Yet it is a magnificent performance. In 1322 a French traveller Bishop Jordanus refers to the existence of Parsis in Thana and Broach<sup>3</sup>.

In 1478 the Parsis of India commissioned a daring Parsi to go to Persia to obtain enlightenment on certain points of religion. This custom of interchange of views lasted through three centuries (upto 1766)<sup>4</sup>. About 1640 Akbar brought down Meher Rana and several other Dasturs from Persia for teaching him the principles of Zarathustrian religion. Guru Haragobinda (1606—1644), the sixth Sikh Guru, had the benefit of the instructions of a Zarathustrian saint<sup>5</sup>.

The author of the Dabistan gives an elaborate account of the Zoroastrian mystics whom he met in Kashmir, in Lahore and in Patna, in the 17th century. The most illustrious of them was Azar Kaivan, who came from Persia and settled at Patna. Hoshyar of Surat was one of his disciples<sup>6</sup>.

It would thus appear that the community between the Indian and the Iranian religions subsisted through ages upto the modern time. Hodivala, in chapter seven of his excellent book 'Parsis of Ancient India' quotes other instances of the activities of the Zarathustrians in India.

Yet all the Iranians were not responsible for the murder

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1. Hodivala—Parsis of Ancient India, p. 53
  2. Dhalla—History of Zoroastrianism, p. 448
  3. Hodivala—Parsis of Ancient India, p. 55
  4. Dhalla—History of Zoroastrianism, p. 457
  5. Dhalla—History of Zoroastrianism, p. 469
  6. Dhalla—History of Zoroastrianism, p. 465



of Mani and Mazdak, and compassionate Mazda would not punish a whole race for the fault of a few miscreants. In His mercy He taught the Iranian nation how to get out of the catastrophe and come into its own again.

Sturdy Iranians, talented, upright and resolute, took up the task of regaining their supermacy, first in the cultural, and then in the religious sphere, and in both these spheres, they succeeded eminently. They did not resort to physical force. That was impracticable under the existing circumstances, and uneconomical too, as it entailed unnecessary waste of energy and loss of life. They proceeded more or less on the line of non-violent resistance, subsequently adopted by Mahatma Gandhi in his fight against the tyranny of the British Raj. They went out, not to kill, but to die, and by dint of their discipline and superior moral force, the Iranians brought the issue to a successful conclusion.

The struggle in the cultural sphere is known as the Shubiya movement. It started in 749 A. D. with the overthrow of the Umayyads, and the rise of the Abbaside Khalifs. It gained force during the regime of the Barmecide Wajirs, who came out of the noblest Iranian stock. The blunt Arab soon found to his disappointment that though he wielded the political power, the Iranian had made himself indispensable to the administration and held every key position in the state. He was rather a figurehead, more tolerated than feared<sup>1</sup>. The Arab came to envy the Iranian<sup>2</sup> and the Iranian ventured to ridicule him openly and call him a dog<sup>3</sup>.

On account of his love for Iranian culture, Harun ul

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1. (i) Browne—Literary History of Persia, vol I, chapter VII
  - (ii) Andre Servier—Islam and the Psychology of the Musalman

p. 145

2. De Lacy—Islam at Cross Roads, p. 15
3. Khoda Baksh—Essays Indian & Is'amic, p. 102



Rashid's son Mamun (both whose mother and wife were Iranians) was called Amir-ul-Kafirin (the king of the unbelievers)<sup>1</sup>. He would chastise the Mollas, if any of them asserted the Koran to be uncreated (i. e. composed by God and not by man)<sup>2</sup>. Could things have been worse for the Arabs, if an Iranian was on the throne ?

In the sphere of religion too the Arab did not fare better. The revolt started with Shiaism, developed as Ismailism and culminated in Sufism, which relegated the Arabic faith to a subordinate position—the position of a means for the attainment of an end. To the Iranian Muslims, Sufism was the ultimate end, and Islam only a means for its attainment—the ladder for mounting to the roof of Sufism.

The thin end of the wedge was introduced when it was claimed, as was done by the Shias, that while Hazrat Muhammad is the prophet of exoteric Islam, Hazarat Ali is the prophet of esoteric Islam (i. e. Sufism). No doubt the supremacy of Hazarat Muhammad was maintained by saying that it was from Hazarat Muhammad that Ali had learnt these esoteric truths, but for many a Shia this is a mere sham. In Shiaism, Ali's position is supreme. A very popular saying amongst the Shias is this: "though I do not believe Ali to be God, I believe that he is not far from being so"<sup>3</sup>. The implication of this proverb is that Ali had direct access to Allah, and had no need of learning esoteric truths from any human being. As a matter of fact some Shias go the length of saying that Allah had intended that the Koran should be given to Ali, but angel Zibrael, by mistake carried it to Muhammad<sup>4</sup>. Thus the Shias contested, by implication,

1. Browne—*Literary History of Persia*, vol I, p. 207

2. Browne—*Literary History of Persia*, vol I, p. 284

3. Claud Field—*Persian Literature*, p. 36

4. Claud Field—*Persian Literature* p. 36

the second part of the Islamic Kalima (Muhammad Rasul Allah) by suggesting that Muhammad is not the sole prophet, but he shared joint prophetship along with Ali, and that the Arabic Islam is not the only Islam, but there is a Persian Islam too (of which Ali is the Prophet).

The monopoly of Hazarat Muhammad to prophet-hood was contested by the Shias, not by implication alone. They asserted that the following verse, favourable to the claims of Ali, was omitted by Osman, in his redaction of the Koran, which is the current edition :

“O Believers, believe in the two lights, Muhammad and Ali”<sup>1</sup>.

It is well-known that Osman, the third Khalifa (who like Ali, was another son-in-law of Hazrat Muhammad) had collected all the copies of the Koran current in his time, redacted one copy, and destroyed all the rest<sup>2</sup>.

The Ismailians developed the underlying idea to a greater length. All the prophets of Islam came from the Semitic stock; they were all Jew (or Arab). The Iranians thought that there should be some Iranian prophets too (even within the bounds of Koran). They therefore evolved the theory of Imams. Imams are practically Nabis (prophets) under a different name. According to some people the status of the Imam is superior to that of the Nabi<sup>3</sup>.

The Imams are twelve in number and Iranian blood runs in the veins of most of them. Hazrat Ali is the first Imam, his son Hasan the second, and his another son Hussein, the third Imam. Hasan is said to have married an Iranian princess, and as all the subsequent Imams claim Imamhoo, by right

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1. Sell—Faith of Islam. p. 12

2. (i) Margoliouth—The Early Development of Mohammedanism, p. 27

(ii) Wali—History of Islamic Peoples, p. 68

3. Abdul Hakim—The Metaphysics of Rumi, p. 113



of inheritance from Hasan, they carried Iranian blood. Whether the story of Hasan's marriage to an Iranian princess is true or not, the Ismailis are satisfied if only an opening is made for the admission of non-Arabic prophets. For along with the non-Arabic prophets, some non-Arabic creeds also were likely to enter into Islam. And this actually happened. Metempsychosis, Incarnation, Reincarnation, Anthropomorphism and similar creeds became a part of Iranian Islam. "These doctrines appear to be endemic in Persia, and always ready to become epidemic under a suitable stimulus"<sup>1</sup>. "The Ismailian movement is one aspect of the persistent battle which the intellectually independent Persian waged against the religious and the political ideals of Islam"<sup>2</sup>. "It would be interesting to compute how many of the '72 sects' into which Islam is supposed to be divided, owe their existence wholly or in part, to the theological teachings of the Persian mind"<sup>3</sup>.

"Ibn Hazam, in his *Kitab-ul-Milat*, looks upon the heretical sects of Persia as a continuous struggle against the Arab power, which the cunning Persian attempted to shake off by these peaceful means"<sup>4</sup>.

"The occupation of Iran by the Musalmans, constitutes one of the most decisive factors in the religious formation of Islam. Persian theologians introduced into the religion lately adopted, their traditional points of view. The conquerors enriched the poverty of their own fundamentals, by elements procured for them, by the experience of a profoundly religious way of life, the way of the Persians, whom they had defeated"<sup>5</sup>. The true Irani however has an unique position. Unlike any other Muhammadian race, they are distinctly national. The Turk,

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1. Browne—*Literary History of Persia*. vol I, p. 311
  2. Iqbal—*Development of Persian Metaphysics*, p. 58
  3. Browne—*The Babi Religion—Introduction*, p. xxiii
  4. Iqbal—*Development of Persian Metaphysics*, p. 57
  5. Tiele—*Religion of the Iranian People*, p. 166

conqueror though he always has been, repudiates still, the name of Turk, calling himself simply a Moslem<sup>1</sup>. So likewise do less distinguished races, he has subjected. But the Persian does not do this. He is before all things Irani, and to the extent, that he has made for himself a Muhammadianism of his own. He boasts of a history and a literature older far than Islam, and has not consented to forget it, as a thing belonging only to "The Age of Ignorance"<sup>2</sup>. Rich and influential Persian families sought to revive their ancient religious beliefs and practices, and in Afshin we have a most conspicuous example of the thin veneer of Islam in Non-Arab circles. Though he rendered brilliant services to Islam, he still held by his own ancestral beliefs and dreamed of the restoration of the Persian Empire, and of "the White Religion"<sup>3</sup>. "When the Arabs entered Persia, Islam came into touch with the teachings of Zarathustra and Mani, and presently with those of Buddha, which worked towards disintegration. For shortly afterwards, there arose two great religious parties; the orthodox, which we describe in general, as that of the Sunnites, and another, the free thinking party, which had, and still has, its origin and centre in Persia and is generally identified with the Shiah<sup>4</sup>." "In fact the rise of the Shiah sect in Persia, and the schism in the Khalifate was due, not only to the family jealousies on behalf of Ali, as the true successor of the Prophet, but also to the fact that the new wine of Aryan thought and philosophy in Persia, burst the leathern bottles of Sunitic creed"<sup>5</sup>.

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1. Even Turkish Nationalism is asserting itself. The Turk now reads the Koran in Turkish language written in Roman Script (Cash—The Expansion of Islam, p. 161)
  2. Blunt—The Future of Islam, p. 186
  3. Khuda Baksh—Essays Indian Islamic, p. 102
  4. Islamic Review—December 1929 p. 454
  5. Cash—Expansion of Islam, p. 102

"Muhammad had accepted as part of his doctrine, that the Jews and the Christians had received a divine revelation. But the Shiah added to these two, the Zoroastrians (or Magians as they were then called), and said that they too had a revelation from God. This enabled the Persian to maintain links with their historical past, and to use their own religious literature while professing Muhammadianism"<sup>1</sup>.

"The Ismailian doctrine is the first attempt to amalgamate contemporary philosophy with a really Persian view of the Universe, and to restate Islam in reference to the synthesis, by an allegorical interpretation of the Koran, a method which was afterwards adopted by Sufism."<sup>2</sup>

The culmination is reached in Sufism whose prophet is Hazrat Khizr. He is an Iranian Prophet (euphemistically called the Presiding Angel of Iran) and has nothing to do with Semitic stock or Semitic theology. He is thus free to teach any truth that he chooses, irrespective of whether it is consistent with Koran or not. Under the aegis of Khizr the Iranian came back to his own again. He brought back all the tenets of the ancestral religion, by holding them as emanating from Khizr. Semblance of the authority of the Koran is maintained by saying that it is Khizr who is alluded to in the Koran (18-64) as the teacher of Moses, which fact implies the approval of the Koran to the doctrines of Khizr.

The Iranian managed the affair very adroitly. He does not flout Islam openly. That is unnecessary waste of energy and also uncalled for ; because in the ultimate analysis, Islam would be found to be largely inspired by the ideal of Mahatma Zarathustra, communicated indirectly through the medium of Judaism, and directly through the medium of

1. Cash—Expansion of Islam, p. 102

2. Iqbal—Persian Metaphysics, p. 56

Salman, the Persian member of the Islamic Trinity of the Nusayris<sup>1</sup>.

Islam is only a modification of the Jewish religion and Judaism is undoubtedly indebted to Maha Ratu Zaratushtre for all those fundamental principles which are held to be worthy in it. Rabbi Geiger has shown how Muhammad borrowed from Judaism, not only words, conceptions, legal rules and stories but also doctrinal views<sup>2</sup>. Lammen's assertion that Islam was the Jewish religion, simplified according to Arabic wants, and amplified by some Christian and Arabic traditions, contains a great deal of truth<sup>3</sup>.

"It would be idle to deny the indebtedness of Islam to Judaism. Muhammad has not merely accepted dogmas and doctrines of Judaism, Talmudical ordinances but has even adopted in their entirety some of the Jewish practices; and far above all these, that which indeed constitutes the very foundation of Islam, viz the conception of a severe and uncompromising monotheism<sup>4</sup>."

Judaism was founded by prophet Moses. That synchronises with the departure of the Jews from Egypt into Palestine. This took place somewhere about 13th century B. C.<sup>5</sup>. But for full six centuries after the death of Moses, the Jews continued to be polytheists and idolaters. They did not also believe in after-life (re-birth). They used to worship many gods, such as Baal and Astoreth, and represented these Gods by figures of men and beasts made of metal<sup>6</sup>. It was only in the 6th century B. C. during the regime of king Kuru (Cyrus),

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1. Browne—Literary History of Persia, vol I, p. 203
  2. Zwemer—The Muslim Doctrine of God, p. 103
  3. Hurgronji—Mohammedanism, p. 61
  4. Khoda Baksh—Essays Indian and Islamic, p. 10
  5. Historian's History of the World- vol II, p. 68
  6. Macdonell—Comparative Religion, p. 120-125

that the Jewish leaders woke up to the idea of monotheism and aniconism, as they came in contact with the Zarathustrians during the period of their exile in Babylon<sup>1</sup>.

Prophets like Nehemiah and Jeremiah spent all their energies for reforming Judaism in the model of Mazda Yasna. Post-exilic Judaism is entirely different from pre-exilic<sup>2</sup>. But for the grace of Maha Ratu Zarathustra, the Jews would have continued to be polytheistic and idolaters for many centuries more. Six centuries passed by and the Christians inherited from Jews the ideals of monotheism and aniconism. Another six centuries passed by and the Muslims inherited these principles from the Christians. Thus for two of its cardinal principles, Islam is indebted to Mazda Yasna indirectly through the medium of Judaism and Christianity.

Mark of direct influence is also not wanting. Take for instance the word "DIN" (religion), a very central word of Islamic theology. Arabic roots are all tri-syllabic such as ktl, bdl. ktb, nzt etc, and the word Din cannot be derived from any one of them. It is the direct adoption of the Daena of the Gatha (धेना of the Veda).

Similarly the word "Sirat" which occurs in the first sura of the Koran, is nothing else than the "Cinvat" bridge of the Gatha<sup>3</sup> (Sukta 46-10, 51-13). There is no Arabic letter corresponding to C (च) of the zend, and C is at once changed to Ch (छ=s) in Arabic.

Then again the formula "Bismilla hir-Rahman-ir Rahim" which is prefixed to every Sura of the Koran, except one, is only the Arabic translation of the Avestic formula "Ba nam i Yazdan Bakhshayandeh wa Bakhshaishgar" which occurs in

1. Macdonell—Comparative Religion, p. 128

2. Macdonell—Comparative Religion, p. 135

3. Blair—Sources of Islam, p. 89



the Khordeh Avesta<sup>1</sup>—a manual compiled by Mobed Maharasband in the Sassanian period<sup>2</sup>.

The Koran had originally prescribed three prayers a day. The custom was later changed to five prayers a day in imitation of Mazda Yasna<sup>3</sup>.

The Koran makes respectful mention of a Scripture to which it gives the name of 'Furquan'. The meaning of the word 'Furquan' is not very clear to the scholars<sup>4</sup> nor will it ever be, until it is seen to be the name of the Gatha. There is polaric difference (Firg) between the ways of Angra and Spenta Manyus. No scripture points out the distinction between them so prominently as the Gatha does. This is why the Gatha is referred to as pre-eminently "the book of distinction" (Furquan), distinction between Right and Wrong.

The person who is responsible for exerting this direct influence is Salman, the Persian. The story of Salman is quite interesting. Salman was born at Ispahan. He was a Zarathustrian by birth<sup>5</sup>, and was born in an opulent family.

By this time Christianity had begun to spread. After the over-throw of the Iranian Empire by Alexander, Palestine had become a dependency of the Roman Empire. St. Paul and St. Peter went to the capital, Rome, and made some converts there. Christianity made some stride in Iran as well, and a Church was constructed at Isfahan. Salman had considerable religious inquisitiveness. He used to visit the local Church, and gradually became drawn to it. Ultimately he adopted Christianity, left his home and began to wonder about.

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1. Blair—Sources of Islam p. 29

2. Browne—Literary History of Persia, vol I, p. 29

3. (i) Rezvi—Parsia, A People of the Book, .p. 45

(ii) Blair—Sources of Islam, p. 128

4. Bell—The Origin of Islam, p, I 19

5. Browne—Literary History of Persia, vol. I, p. 203

The two fertile provinces of Arabia viz. Hira and Yaman, which alone counted in that country, were dependencies of the Iranian empire<sup>1</sup> the remaining tract was a vast barren desert and very sparsely populated, so that nobody ever cared to occupy it. Hira and Yaman belonged to Iran, and so the barren desert also was supposed to belong to the Shahan Shah of Iran. This is how Hazrat Muhammad, who was a son of the desert portion, used to take pride in the fact that he was born during the reign of the just emperor Khasru Nasirvan<sup>2</sup>, the most illustrious of the Sassanian emperors.

The Iranian officials had to learn the Arabic language, and some of them became famous for their ability to imitate the manners of the Arabians. One such officer was Khurra Khasru, the Governor of Yaman<sup>3</sup>. There was free movement of people between Iran and Arabia. In course of his travel Salman arrived at Medina. Hazrat Muhammad was then preaching Islam from Medina. The leaders of Mecca had taken up a very hostile attitude towards Islam, and Hazrat Muhammad thought it better to shift to Medina, which was the home of his maternal grandfather.

The compilation of the Koran spread over 23 years<sup>4</sup>. It had been revealed to Hazrat Muhammad, not in the completed form, but revealed piece-meal.

[Sura 20 (Taha) verse 112 and Sura 17 (Night journey) verse 107]

The first revelation came in 610 A. D., when Hazrat Muhammad was in his 40th year, and it continued throughout

1. Browne—Literary History of Persia vol. 1, p. 179

2. Browne—Literary History of Persia vol. I, p. 166

3. Browne—Literary History of Persia vol. I, p. 262

4. Margolionth—Early Development of Muhammadionism p. 7

[ vide also Sura 25 ( Furkan ) verse 34 ]

the remaining 23 years of his life and ceased with his death in 632 A. D.

Hazrat Muhammad used to speak out the verses as they came and his scribes used to take them down. Sometimes an inappropriate verse had to be abrogated and a new verse substituted in its place [Sura 2 (Cow) verse 100 and Sura 16 (Bee) verse 103<sup>1</sup>.]

When Salman came to Medina, Islam was in the making ; for though the Meccan Suras had been pronounced, the Medinite Suras were still coming. It was in Medina that the larger Suras "descended" (which is the Islamic expression for compilation). The main purpose of Islam was to teach the Arabs the lessons of monotheism, and an-iconism<sup>2</sup>. Their more civilised neighbours, the Jews and the Christians, were monotheists and non-idolaters, but the Arabs (Beduins) worshipped innumerable idols, in their central shrine, the Kaba. Hazrat Muhammad desired that the Arabs should not lag behind the Jews and the Christians. Thus monotheism and an-iconism are found to be the main themes of the Koran. They are iterated and re-iterated throughout the whole of the Koran, in all its Suras. Some Suras relate an Arabic or a Jewish legend, and there is sometimes a reference to an event of current history. Then there are some mythological factors, such as the stories of heaven and hell, and of angels and demons. These stories have no philosophical basis, but they are found present in all religions, and are tolerated as a concession to popular belief. So far as Islam is concerned, scholars are of opinion that most of these stories came over to Islam from the Avesta, through the agency of Salman (Rodwell—Koran—

1. 3. (i) Sell — Faith of Islam, p. 73

(ii) Khoda Baksh — History of Islamic. Peoples p. 31

2. Hurgronji — Muhammadianism p. 35

Preface, P.8). Monotheism and an-iconism are emphasised in all the stories, and these may be said to be the two central dogmas of Islam.

The Muslims of Medina were then a very small community, and they were afraid that the Meccan people might attack them. They began to consult as to how they could defend themselves. In this matter Salman rendered them a yeoman's service and at once became a hot favourite of Hazrat Muhammad.

The Arabs then were very backward in material civilisation. They did not even know how to construct a brick-built house. "The famous temple of the Kaba was merely a modest enclosure of stone and sundried mud bricks<sup>1</sup>". "The earliest mosques were simply enclosures, surrounded by a plain wall. It was Khalif Mawaiya who employed brick and mortar and introduced Persian workers to execute the repairs<sup>2</sup>. Salman had some skill in military engineering, and he taught the Muslims of Medina how they could defend themselves fairly well by digging a canal around the town. This brought considerable relief to the Muslims of Medina. The Persian word (Khandak) for canal, bears the memory of Salman's contribution<sup>3</sup>.

The association of Salman gave Hazrat Muhammad, the opportunity of gaining first-hand information about Mazda-Yasna.

Hazrat Muhammad was wellaware of the monotheism and an-iconism current in the immediate neighbours, viz. the Jews and the Christian. He was now assured to find that the Iranian religion also insisted on these points. Salman used to relate to him the ways and the manners of the Persians, and

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1. Andre Servier — Islam and the Psychology of the Musalman p. 235
  2. O' Leary — Arabic Thought, p. 77
  3. Margoliouth — Muhammad p. 324

Hazrat Muhammad developed a regardful attitude towards Mazda-Yasna. He referred to the Iranians as Pre-Koranic Muslims [Sura 28 (story) verse 58] and gave to their Scripture (the Gatha), the name of Furkan. Some people try to explain the word Furkan, as another name for Koran, but the necessity for another name has not been explained. The word Furkan occurs altogether seven times in the Koran. In all the places it means the scripture of a previous monotheistic creed. In Sura 8-42 (spoils) the words used are—"On the day of Furkan, the day when the two hosts met" The suggested meaning is "the Book of Distinction"—the book which points out the distinction between right and wrong, between Spenta and Angra (and no book does this work as pointedly as the Gatha). The imagery also reminds one about Yasna 44-15 (when the two fighting forces met). In any case Hazrat Muhammad admitted the Iranians to be "a People of the Book"<sup>1</sup> i. e. the 'Colleagues of the Muslims', and Hazrat Muhammad changed the three times prayer (like the Jews), prescribed previously, [Sura 17 (night journey) verse 80, and Sura 2 (Cow) verse 239] to five times prayer a day [Sura 30 (Greeks)-verse 16], and this was done in emulation of the Parsis<sup>2</sup>.

Salman grew into the favour of Hazrat Muhammad day by day, and he at this time adopted Islam. Probably he thought that thereby he could be much more friendly with Hazrat Muhammad. And in this he did not err; for he rose to be a member of the Nusayrian Trinity (along with Hazrat Muhammad and Hazrat Ali)<sup>3</sup>, which is an enviable

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1. (i) Browne — Literary History of Persia, vol. 1, p 202  
 (ii) Rezvi — Parsis .A People of the Book Chapter VI
  2. (i) Blair — Sources of Islam p. 127  
 (ii) Rezvi — Parsis, A People of the Book, p. 45
  3. Browne — Literary History of Persia, vol. I, p. 208





eminence for any Musalman. Probably Islam suited better the active and fervant temperament of the old Zarathustrian, than the passive and the pacific habits of Christianity. Hazrat Muhammad on his part, granted to Salman the unique favour of permitting him to say his prayers in the Persian language<sup>1</sup>.

This permission to Salman<sup>2</sup> was fraught with immense consequence. For it was the seed of the Persian School of Islam, which at first started as Shia-ism, and ultimately developed into Baha-ism. Salman has thus been called the first Shia<sup>3</sup>. "The Arab and Azam (Persia) represent two adverse currents of political thought and political creed, incompatible, irreconcilable, and eternal in antagonism, as the two poles<sup>4</sup>". "The transfer of the Capital from Damascus to Baghdad brought about a tremendous breach in the continuity of Islam<sup>5</sup>. Shiaism at first developed into Ismailism, and then into Sufism, and then into Bahaism. The movement of the Shubiyas and the Mutazites, which represent the first reaction of the Irasian mind, against the arrogance of Arabs, are not strictly speaking movements for religious reformation. The Shubiyas asserted the supremacy of Iranian culture, and the Mutazilites the supremacy of Iranian philosophy.

Ismailism is the first attempt to introduce Persian philo-

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1. (i) Sell — Faith of Islam p. 301

(ii) Amiralī — Spirit of Islam p. 165

2. It is to be noted that 'Salman' is a pure Iranian name. Salm was the son of Thraetona (Traitana of the Veda, and Firdun of the latter Avesta), who is a celebrated hero of the Indo-Iranian period. Salm corresponds to Vedic Śrīma. (Keith — Religion and Philosophy of Veda and Upanisads, p. 232)

3. Hare — Religions of the Empire, p. 94

4. Khoda Baksh — Essays Indian and Islamic, p. 124

5. Margoliouth — Early Development of Muhammadianism p. 208

sophy into Islam by allegorical interpretation of the Koran<sup>1</sup>, which method reached perfection in the exposition of the Doctors of Sufism. Ali is generally considered to be the Apostle of Shiaism<sup>2</sup>, and his descendants (the Imams) to be Apostles of Ismailism<sup>3</sup>. Khizir is adored as the Prophet of Sufism.

There lived at this time an Arab named Mosalama. He had a swelled head. He called Muhammad a 'False Prophet' and himself claimed to be the "True Prophet"<sup>4</sup>. He wrote a letter to Hazrat Muhammad calling upon him to give up his false religion. Then there was Nadir bin Harith, who composed a book, including therein the stories of Iranian heroes, Rustam and Isfandiyar. He claimed that his book was better than that of Hazrat Muhammad<sup>5</sup>. Another note-worthy Arab, Abu Jahal was an inveterate enemy of Hazrat Muhammad. It is said that Koran refers to him in Suras 96-9, and 22-9, and describes his perversity<sup>6</sup>. Even his own uncle Abu Lahab was a bitter enemy of the Prophet. His depravity was so great, that a complete Sura (Sura 111—Abu Lahab) had to be announced for his condemnation. They were a good lot, and they had their followers too. These enemies of Hazrat Muhammad used to say that the Koran was a forgery (i.e. the imitation of an old Scripture)—vide [Sura 67 (Inevitable) verse 44] They used to taunt that "The Tales of the Ancients" were being related to Hazrat Muhammad day and night, and that

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1. Iqbal — Development of Persian Metaphysics, p. 63

2. O' Leary — Arabic Thought, p. 92

3. Macdonald — Aspects of Islam, p. 96

4. Sale — Koran p. 268 (foot note)

5. (i) Blair — Sources of Islam, p. 69

(ii) Margolionth — Muhammad, p. 135

6. (i) Rodwell — Koran, p. 20

(ii) Sale — Koran, p. 327

these were being repeated in the Koran, as is recited in the Koran—"But they say, 'Tales of Ancients', that he hath put to writing and they were dictated to him morning and evening' Sura 25 (Furkan) verses 5-7)

Hazrat Muhammad denied the charge and said that the person whom they mean (*viz.* Salman) speaks a foreign tongue, while the Koran is expressed in pure Arabic [Sura 16 (Bee)-verse 105].

No doubt the allegation had been very lightly made. But the fact that such allegation was at all made, and made in respect of Salman,<sup>1</sup> is an evidence of the hold, which people thought, Salman had on the affection of Hazrat Muhammad. That certainly is a matter of pride for a foreigner.

Some Parsis are inclined to slight Salman as a renegade. But one may look the other-way. Salman may have appreciated Islam as a religion which restates the fundamental truths of Mazda-Yasna. The generous attitude of Hazrat Muhammad gave him considerable encouragement. For Hazrat Muhammad pointed to Salman and said that his people would surpass the Arabs in the matter of religion<sup>2</sup>. The words proved prophetic. For Sufism, the Iranic modification of Islam, has now come to be the crown and glory of the Arabic religion. And the adoption of the word "Dina", as the term for religion, is a sure indication of Hazrat Muhammad's regard for Mazda Yasna.

It may also be remembered that at that period there was no repulsion against Islam. Hazrat Muhammad did not wish to suppress the other religions by force and expressly stated : "To me, my religion, and to you, your religion" [Sura 109 (unbelieves) verse 6]. That was a very just proposal. The repulsion started when some misguided followers of Islam, took upon themselves the task of supplanting Mazda-Yasna,

1. Rodwell — Koran, p. 208 ( foot note )

2. Sura 47 ( Mohammad ) verse 40. Sale's Koran p. 492 (foot note)

instead of supplementing it. The devastation of Iranic culture created such a revulsion, that the Iranians (even those who accepted Islam) cannot forgive Omar, the second Khalifa, who is responsible for sending the expedition to Iran. Lulua, the Iranian convert to Islam, stabbed Omar to death<sup>1</sup> and Jalal tells us that at Kas no Shiah would sell a piece of bread to you if your name happened to be Omar.

गर ओमर नामे तू अन्दर शहरे काश ।

कस बेनफरुशद ब सद दांग लवाश ॥

Masnavi—6-3220

Not Islam, but the abuse of Islam, is responsible for the dislike that some people feel towards it. This aversion makes them blind to the merits of Islam. Salman was free from such prejudice.

Let us take all the help that the Koran gives, but let us also take note of the caution of Jalal.

आन चे नपसन्दी ब खुद अय शेखे दीन ।

चुन पसन्दी बर वेरादर अय अमीन ॥ Masnavi 6-1569

[Oh Shekh, how do you choose that behaviour towards others, which you do not approve towards yourself ?]

Hatred is not the way to God. It is through love alone that experience of God is possible.

मीरा कहे बिना प्रेमसे ना मिले नन्दलाल ।

[Mira says that God is not accessible except through love]

Love is the characteristic element of Godhead. No one can know what Mazda is like, unless he has ever felt the thrill of love (for anybody whomsoever). Wherever there is love, there is Mazda. Love and Mazda are almost

1. Browne—Literary History of Persia, vol. I, p. 203

inter-changeable terms. Mazda means one's "Constant Thought" (मस्=constant, धैय=thought). It is Love alone that can establish the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Thus the Scriptures that prescribe the discipline of Love, cannot be ignored, without doing harm to one's own soul—without closing the door of God-experience.

Love for God and Love for man go together. For Mazda lives within his creatures.

सर्वमूतस्थितं यो माम् भजत्य् एकत्वम् आस्थितः ।

सर्वथा वर्तमानो अपि, स योगी मयि वर्तते ॥

Gita—6-31

[The devotee who sees Me in every one of My creatures, lives in Me]

Those who cannot rise to the positive virtue of Love मैत्री (Maitri) of Gautama Buddha ], may cultivate at least the negative virtue of Equality [ अहिंसा (Ahimsa) of Gautama Buddha ]

This is the minimum requirement for bringing the Kingdom of Heaven to earth.

That is why Masnavi is an indispensable evangel ; for it is a Gospel of Love. And the beginning of this Sufistic outlook we may trace back to Salman. He was desirous of availing all the help that any religion may give.

In any case Salman was the first Iranian to adopt Islam. For he did so during the lifetime of Hazrat Muhammad, and all Iranians who are attached to Islam, should remember him as their pioneer.

As a member of a cultured race, Salman was regarded by the early Muslims as an acquisition. For at that time no body ever dreamt that Islam would subvert Mazda Yasna<sup>1</sup>. But the folly of the Sassanians, who paid more attention to

1. De Lacy-Islam at the Cross Roads, p. 5



the Yasta, than to the Yasna, more attention to the Vendidad than to the Gatha, made this possible.

The Parsi however does not know despair. He can rely on the graces of Mazda, for his resurrection.

तत् मज्जदा तवा खषथ्रेम् ।

या एरेम्ने-ज्योइ दाही द्विगओवे वह्यो Yasna 53-9

[ This is your glory Mazda, that the pious ultimately prevails over the wicked ]

Despair is a sort of atheism—denial of the belief in the moral governance of Mazda.

ता तु तारीक ओ मल्ल ओ तीरेह ।

दान के बा दीवे लइन हमशीरेह् ॥ Masnavi 1-1641

[ In so far as you give way to despair, despondence and pessimism, you prove yourself to be a half-brother of the Devil ]

Loss of faith in the moral governance is the death of the moral man. Such unfortunate fellow degrades into an animal in no time.

Masnavi serves as a permanent reminder to go back to the pure religion of the Gatha.

Mazda can turn autumn into spring, for He kills without the sword.

बाज गो दानम् के इन इसरारे हु अस्त ।

ज्ञानके वि शमशीर कुस्तन कारे उ अस्त ॥

Masnavi 1-3747

[ Tell again, for that is the skill of the Lord. He knows how to kill without the sword—to kill the old man, and raise up a new one, by change of heart. ]

The voice of Zarathustra will prevail in Iran again. Nay his Gospel will resound throughout the whole world.



The Religion of the Gatha has got the merits of Islam, viz. simplicity and vigour. It has got the additional merit of being the complementary associate of Hinduism, the most comprehensive of all religions. It is bound to spread but this cannot happen by mere pious wish. Every Parsi has his part to play. He must have personal touch with the Gospel of the Holy Prophet. He must recite at least five verses of the Gatha at each of the five daily prayers. Religion does not live by mere profession; it has to be practised, and practised by every member of the community. Aurangzeb could find time for saying prayers even on the battlefield. No doubt he was not very pious (righteous), but he was religious (mindful of the duty of keeping touch with the National Scripture). Certainly piety is the greater thing, but it is apt to be short-lived, without the aid of Religion. This is why Maharatu Zarathustra proclaims.

य्यत् दएनाओ वहिस्ता यूजेन् मीज़दे ।

अषा यूख्ता याही दे जामास्या ॥

Yasna 49-9

[Jamaspā used to practise Religion (Dina), and as its fruit, he grew up to be pious (united to Asa) ]

Atharvan Zarathustra emphasises here the need of Dina, (Religion) for the growth of piety (Asha).

Even Gutama Buddha asserted the need of Sangha (Religious Group) for the protection of Dharma (piety)

बुद्धं शरणं गच्छामि, धम्मं शरणं गच्छामि, संघं शरणं गच्छामि ।

There is at least one practice of Dina (viz. recitation of the National Scripture at the daily prayers) which cannot be dispensed with. Without this rite, Religion ends in smoke—as it did in Sassanian days, when they neglected the Gatha and busied themselves with such trifles as the proper expiation for the sin of killing an otter. This is how a simple Religion gains the march, over a heavy one, for

people here are not burdened with the dead weight of traditional dogmas, and not bewildered by a plethora of unmeaning rituals. Having to do too much, they did not do anything at all. The Sassanians failed to keep touch with the Gatha, on account of the burden of rituals, (as some modern members now fail to do, on account of their laziness), while every one of the Musalman Arabs used to be in touch with the Koran, in his five daily prayers. This resulted in the disaster of Nahavand. The best scripture cannot protect the nation, if the individuals lose touch with it. A poorer Scripture would save the nation by sustaining the spirit of solidarity, if all the units care to keep touch with Guru Grantha.

In Theology, the main lessons of the Koran are Monotheism and Aniconism. All other sayings of the Koran deal with social, legal, historical or legendary matters. Now Monotheism and Aniconism had been very boldly proclaimed by Bhagavan Zarathustra, ages ahead. Thus there is little justification for hurling the furious attack on Mazda-Yasna, as some misguided followers of Islam perpetrated. This they did in spite of the very clear instruction of Hazrat Muhammad that there should be no compulsion in religion [ Sura 2 (Cow), verse 257 ], The miscreants justify their conduct by saying that the above Sura was abrogated by Sura 47 (Muhammad) verse 4, where instruction is given that 'the infidels should be killed out-right'<sup>1</sup>. The reconciliation of such contrary directions is a necessity, as much for the safety of the non-Muslims, as for the good name of Islam. That is why the Masnavi comes in as an indispensable exegesis to the study of the Koran—and along with the Masnavi, comes the source of its inspiration, viz. the Gospel of Khizir. (i. e. the Gatha) for if the Gospel of Khizir is not

1. Sell Historical Development of the Koran, p. 84 and p. 110

identical with the Gospel of Zarathustra, it is not very different either.

Hazrat Muhammad was not unaware that some verses of the Koran are liable to be misunderstood or misinterpreted and therefore expressly stated that the Koran may mislead some people [Sura 17 (Night journey) verse 42, Sura 18 (Cave) verse 55]. To counteract the evil effects of such misapprehension, he arranged the teaching of Esoteric Islam or Sufism. But he knew quite well the backwardness of the Arabs and therefore he followed the principle of Solon who told the Greeks that his laws were not the best that he could devise, but they were the best that they could receive. Hazrat Muhammad therefore did not make any direct mention of Sufism in the Koran. He entrusted the work of propagating Sufism to Hazrat Ali, with instructions to teach it only to the selected few. Thus Hazrat Muhammad came to be regarded as the Prophet of Exoteric Islam (Tarikat and Shariat) and Hazrat Ali came to be regarded as the Prophet of Esoteric Islam (Hakikat and Marifat)<sup>1</sup>. To some people there is no necessary connection between these two parts (exoteric and esoteric). Some of them consider Sufism to be a sort of poetic effusion, having no religious significance at all. Others consider Sufism to be exotic to Islam. This is the view of the Wahabis, and Dr. Iqbal seems to agree with it when he says that the deer was pierced with arrows, when it left the precincts of the Kaba. To the common man, these two parts, though quite distinct, are not unconnected. And Salman who was conversant, both with the Dina and the Cisti portion of the Mazda Yasna, is supposed to furnish the link. He thus becomes a member of the Nusayrian Trinity. Thus Mazda-Yasna, comprising as it

1. (i) De Lacy—Islam at the Cross Roads, p. 11

(ii) Browne—The New History of the Bab, p. 331

does both Dina and Cisti, presents a full picture of the ideal religion that Islam proposes to delineate, in its two parts—exoteric and esoteric.

Jalal and Kabir are the best exponents of the exalted principles of the Cisti of the Gatha.

The gospels of Jalal and Kabir vouchsafe quicker realisation (experience) of God. Discourse on Monotheism and Aniconism gives only a description of the Entity (God), but does not give the Entity itself,—does not give an experience (taste) of the thing. One may simulate the plaint of the nightingale, but unless he has in him, the love of the *bulbul*, he cannot experience the thrill that the touch of the rose induces.

गर बेआमुज़ी सफीरे बुलबुली ।

तु चे दानी केउ चे दारद बा गुलो ॥ Masnavi 1-3358

[You may imitate the whistle of the *bulbul*, but how can you know what he feels for the rose.]

Love is the element that unites man to God and Love is the elegance that the Gatha teaches.

कथा मज़्दा ज़रेम्-चरानी हचा क्षमत् ।

आस्केतिं क्षमाकां ग्यत् चा मोइ ख्यात् वाख्स् अणो ॥

Yasna 44-17

[When Mazda would I swirl with you ? Teach me, Ahura, how I can develop Love for you].

This is altogether a different atmosphere, very different from the sermons on Monotheism and Aniconism. We are no longer on the way to God ; we are in the very presence of Mazda.

To some people the Gatha is not easy of access. They may find it easier to subscribe to Jalal or Kabir and they can do so without sacrificing any of the essential principles of Islam.



The Parsis might organise themselves on the lines of Dayananda Saraswati, who had accepted all the salubrious principles of Atharavan Zarathustra and who retained the Yajna form of worship, which is Vedic, as against the Puja form of worship, which is Puranic. That would make it easier for them to practise the religion under conditions of modern age. It does not do merely to profess a religion ; it has got to be practised, if religion is to yield its fruit. The Sassanians made a mistake. They imposed so many rituals, as to make religion impracticable for the work-a-day busy man. This was contrary to the admonition of Maha-ratu Zarathustra (Yasna 30-6). The religion of the Sassanian period was really Yazata Yasna, and not Mazda-Yasna. This was the cause of their downfall. For Yazata Yasna is only Deva-Yasna in disguise. A mere change of name (Yazata in place of Deva) does not change its character. Apart from the question of its theological worth, Polytheism breaks up the solidarity of the nation and too many rituals entail enormous loss of energy and time. A polytheistic and rite-ridden religion is not able to withstand the onslaught of a religion consolidated by monotheism and simplicity. The Parsis have to make a short shrift of Yazata Yasna, if their religion is to survive in the struggle for existence. Others are only too willing to take advantage of the weakness that Yazat Yasna is apt to cause.

Some of my Parsi friends may resent the insolence of my offering an advice against the time-honoured custom. I would submit my apology in the words of Jalal.

बर जाजा-ए दोस्त सङ्ग-ए दोस्त जन ।

Masnavi 1-3979

[ You may throw stones at the glass of the friend, if the welfare of the friend is your motive ]

Not that Deva Yasna (or Yazata Yasna, by whatever name it is called) has not got its good points, but because

it serves to disintegrate the nation, and thereby imperil its existence, it has got to be discountenanced. The Sassanians had this weakness (blind regard for the past) and had to pay for it dearly.

Mahamuni Nanak offered a solution. He adopted all the principles of Mazda Yasna in the public life of the nation, yet tolerated Deva-Yasna in the private life of an individual, if one chose to do so. This is how he did not proceed to extirpate the Deva Yasnists (Hindus) in the wake of the fanatic mollas. But he would not tolerate Deva-Yasna in public (national) life. Mahamuni Nanak thereby showed the way as to how the Hindus and the Parsis could unite under a common banner and rescue themselves from the woeful plight in which they had fallen.

Islam had entered into Persia in 642 A. D. after the battle of Nahavand, It entered into Afganistan in 962 A. D, when Alaptegin, a general of the Samanide monarch of Khorasan, conquered Ghazni. But even then Kabul and Jalalabad continued to be in the possession of Jaipal, the Brahmin king of the Shahi dynasty, till Sabuktegin, the son of Alaptegin, conquered them in 986 A. D. Islam entered into India in 1001 A. D. along with Sultan Mamud, the son of Sabuktegin, though the permanent occupation of the country started with Shihabuddin Ghorî, who in 1192 defeated Prithviraj Chauhan at the battle of Tarain. Eight hundred years after the battle of Nahavand, the Indo-Iranians learnt how to square up accounts with the aggressors. For Jahangir notes in his autobiography, that many Muslims were giving up Islam and entering into the Sikh Panth. Subsequently even Muhammad Shah, the Emperor of Delhi (1719-48) adopted the Sib-Narayani creed<sup>1</sup>, which is framed, more or less on the pattern of Nanak. In the political field also, the

1. Farquhar—Outline of Religious Literature, p. 345

Mughal and the Pathan vacated the throne of Lahore in favour of Ranajit Sinha. The Sikh combined in him the virtues of the Hindu and the Parsi and had become irresistible.

The Sikhs however might take up the Gita (rather the Rudra Gita) as a sacred heritage. That would make its broad basis broader still. The Gita enjoins the harmony of the Deva Yana and the Pitri Yana.

यान्ति देववृत्ता देवान्, पितृन् यान्ति पितृवृत्ताः । Gita 9-25

[The Deva Yanists reach the goal, and so do the Pitri Yanists.]

This is how it says

तेनैव रूपेण चतुर्भुजेन

सहस्रबाहो भव विद्वमूर्ते ॥

Gita 11-46

[Though You are formless (literally have infinite forms), may you appear to me as four-armed Visnu]

Aniconism is the truth of the matter. but the use of an icon helps some devotees to concentrate their mind.

Ganadhara Govind Sinha evinced his reverence for the Gita by translating it into the Panjabi. As a matter of fact, he lived the Gita—his life was a materialisation of the ideal of the Gita. Unfortunately it has not been printed. The manuscript is rotting in the Government Library of Lahore.

The more that Islam absorbs the principles of Jalal and Kabîr, the more tolerant it would be. That will bring security to the non-Muslims, and the vigour of Islam would then serve to keep the ideals of Monotheism and Aniconism prominent before the eyes. Islam would then be an object of love and not an object of dislike.

1. Mohan Singh—A History of the Panjabi Literature, p. 42

A greater attention to the expositions of Jalal and Kabir would make Mazda-Yasna more lucid. Mazda Yasna would then be able to serve a wider group of humanity.

In all its essential principles the Sikh Panth is indifferent from the cults of Jalal and Kabir. Mahamuni Nanak only makes this addition, that there is truth also in the Angirasa (Hindu) point of view, and it does not deserve to be eliminated altogether. For after all, what is worthy in Aryan culture—Veda, Upanisad and Gita—has been preserved by the Angirasa Section.

Thus the Muslim, the Parsi and the Sikh, all might profit by the Gospels of Jalal and Kabir.

Jalal started with the idea of distributing the Elixir of Khizir.

आवे स्त्रीअ अज जुये लुत्फे औलीया ।

मीखुरीम, अय तिशूनए घाफेल बे आ ॥ Masnavi 3-4302

[ I would now drink the elixir of Khizir. Come and join with me, oh unwary thirsty traveller ]

The influence of Khizir on Kabir is evident from the original name given to him. Kabir had been named as "Khanjir" in remembrance of the holy memory of Khizir<sup>1</sup>. Then again the biographer of Kabir, designates his book as 'Kabir Mansur'<sup>2</sup>. And Mansur is a name that stands as the signal of the victory of Sufism.

ताफ्त नुरे सुबेह ओ मा अज नुरे तु ।

दर सबुहि बा मये मन्सुरे तु ॥

Masnavi 1-1809

[ The light of dawn has shone forth and in that splendour, we are drinking the wine of your Mansur ]

1. Westcott—Kabir and Kabirpanth p. 5

2. Govinda Trigunayata कबीर की विचारधारा p. 65

Mahamuni Nanak is said to have learnt the truth of religion from Khizir<sup>1</sup>.

It is thus evident that all of them three, Jalal, Kabir and Nanak, had been inspired by Khizir (that is to say, by Atharvan Zarathustra).

The nine-knotted magic wand of Zarathustra (Vendidad 9-14) works wonders. It changes aggressive Islam to peaceful Sufism. It infuses the highest religious principles into three premier apostles, like Jalal, Kabir and Nanak. It gives one a glimpse of the earliest, and at the same the highest, effusion of the religious consciousness of the Aryan people.

But if you neglect him as an ordinary apostle, (i. e. do not approach him in the right spirit) you cannot derive the fullest benefit of the monitions of this supermost Prophet.

गर ज्ञ रूप सुरतश मीनगच्छ

घोरेण शीरान अज्ञ उ मीनज्ञनवी

Masnavi 1-3128

[ If you look upon him as an ordinary mortal, how can you hear his leonine roar ? ]

Let us however revert to the story of the reaction of the Iranians to the challenge of Islam.

Whether the influence of Salman is responsible for it or not, the Dina of the Koran bears considerable resemblance to the Dina (exoteric portion) of the Gatha. For many reasons, the Iranians of the period did not like to emphasise the difference that there was between the two Dinās. The more so, as in their eyes, it was only the Cisti (esoteric portion) of the Gatha that counts. They left the problem of Dina alone.

The Iranian did not demolish the structure of Islam. He only added a beautiful turret on the top of the hall—the turret of Sufism. That at once converted the narrow mosque into

1. Cunningham—History of the Sikhs, p. 56



a catholic shrine. The Sufi does not discard the Sariat. He only uses it as a stepping stone for ascending to the Marifat which is only another name for the Cisti of the Gatha.

It is therefore necessary to understand the relation between Sufism and Islam. Four theories are current about the origin of Sufism. These have been examined by Browne in his Literary History of Persia (vol 1, p. 194).

1. Some say that Sufism is based on Greek philosophy.
2. Others say that Sufism originated out of the Vedanta philosophy of India.
3. Others hold that Sufism is the resurrection of Mazda Yasna.
4. The Muslims say that Sufism is the natural development of Islam.

We may take them one by one.

1. Greek Philosophy : Though there had been in pre-Islamic Iran, a university at Jund-i-Shahpur for teaching Greek philosophy, and though the works of Plato were translated into Arabic in Islamic Iran, Sufism bears no resemblance to the views of any of the famous Greek philosophers. It has similarity with the philosophy of Plotinus to some small extent, which does not justify the assumption of Greek origin.

2. The Influence of Vedanta : There is no doubt that Sufism is largely influenced by the Vedanta, particularly by the Visistadwaita school of Vedanta philosophy. But there is also a marked difference between Vaishnavism and Sufism, in such matters as the use of the icon, the structure of the society and the necessity of purification rites. Thus the one cannot be identified with the other.

3. Revival of Gathic Cisti : Of all the Muslim countries, Sufism grew and developed in Iran alone. Thus it is in the national traits of the Iranians, in

their ancient cult and culture, that the root of Sufism should be searched for. Dr. Browne lightly dismissed the suggestion with the remark that sufficient facts about Mazda Yasna are not yet known which can justify the conclusion that Sufism grew out of it.<sup>1</sup> With all respect to that erudite scholar, we venture to point out that his remark is quite unjustified. Sufism is the cult of Love and the Gatha definitely asserts worship through love to be the characteristic feature of Mazda Yasna ( Sukta 32-1 ). Then again the Gatha does not speak of abstract love, which may or may not mean much. Like the Vaishnava scriptures it speaks of concrete love, the love of the friend, the brother, the father ( Sukta 45-11 ) or of the spouse ( Sukta 53-4 ). Since the love of the consort is the central theme of Sufism, as any reader of Hafiz can convince himself, it is idle to say that sufficient facts are not known to justify the Iranian origin of Sufism. An unprejudiced mind would have come to a different conclusion. Complete surrender to the will of God is the breath of Sufism. It has been called Khetwavadatha ( gift of the Self ) in the Avesta ( Yasna 12-9 ) and such total surrender is extolled in the Gatha ( Sukta 33-14 ). All the characteristic features of Sufism may be traced to the Gatha, and it is sheer perversity to try to seek its origin elsewhere. Hafiz unequivocally asserts Sufism to be "the wine for the Maghas" :

जामे मये मघाना बा हम मघान तवान ज़द (Ode—224)

[ "Sufism is the wine ( as intoxicating as wine ) of the Maghas and can be sipped only in the company of the Maghas. ]

4. Islamic origin : Let us now take up the knotty question of the Islamic origin of Sufism. There is a popular mistake that Sufism is one of the sects of Islam. The idea is as wide-spread as the belief that the sky is blue. But none of these beliefs are

1. Browne—Literary History of Persia, vol I, p. 419.

justified by facts. There are some Musalmans who are unwilling to make any distinction between Sufism and Islam. One of them, Ikbal Ali Shah, a Sufi scholar, has written a book "Islamic Sufism" to prove his theory that Sufism and Islam are identical, though the name of the book suggests that there may be non-Islmic Sufism. We would have been glad to agree with the good scholar, if mere assertion amounted to a proof of the matter. The characteristic feature of Sufism is worship through love, and love as an element of worship is quite unknown to the Koran. Nowhere in the 114 chapters of the Koran, has Allah ever been addressed as "Father". Not to speak of conjugal love, which is the unfailing imagery of the Sufis, orthodox Islam does not encourage even the idea of filial love, which is the accepted creed of almost all other religions. Amirali in his popular book "The Spirit of Islam" ( p. 122 ) offers an explanation for this unusual outlook. He says that the relationship ( of the Fatherhood of God ) was so much abused by the Christians, that Hazrat Muhammad did not like to bring into use the word "Father". Whether the explanation is adequate or not, it testifies the fact that the Koran does not address Allah as Father.

One other article of faith of the Sufis is ब्रह्मवाद i. e. the assertion of the reality of the Absolute. According to this view, the Absolute (Impersonal God) is as real as God (Personal God). The former is the negative, and the latter the positive aspect of the same Ultimate Reality. Brahma is Ishwara, and Ishwara is Brahma. Thus it is that the Gatha says that Mazda is Brahma (Sukta 45-8, 53-2).

There is no mention of the Absolute in the Koran. The Koran does not know the Absolute, and therefore there is no discussion in the Koran about the relation between Impersonal God and Personal God. The Bhakti Yoga of the Koran is therefore a naive Bhakti Yoga and not rational Bhakti Yoga.

i.e. not based on a consideration of the relation subsisting between Transcendant God and Immanent God.

True to his Gathic heritage, Jalal could not think of passing over this moot point of theology silently. In the spirit of Sukta 45-8 of the Gatha, Jalal declares that the Impersonal God and the Personal God interclasp each other.

मन कसी दर नाकसी दर याफतम ।

पस कसी दर नाकसी दर बाफतम ॥

Masnavi—1-1735

[ I found the Person in the Impersonal, and then wove these two (the Impersonal and the Personal) together.]

Another article of the Faith of Sufism is the revelation of Brahma in the human soul. Consciousness is divided into two parts, mind and soul ; and the soul is the highest expression of Brahma. It is, so to say, the reflection of Brahma. To know the Self is only next to knowing the Brahma. The Sufi sees God most in his own Soul.

The Gatha speaks of the two Selves (Sukta 28-2, 43-3 and 51-9). and urges the ideal of knowing the Self (Sukta 43-16) and making it the seat of God (Sukta 48-10).

The Koran does not distinguish between mind and soul,<sup>1</sup> and the idea of seeing God in the Soul is revolting to the Koran. Thus when Mansur uttered the truth "An al-Haq" he was put to the gibbet and when Baezid said, that within him lived Allah, the hearers attacked him with hatchet and sword.

About the most important topics of Theology—Absolute, Soul and Love (relation between God and man)—Sufism and Koran differ as widely as the two poles and there is no reason for coming to the conclusion that Sufism and Islam are one and the same or that Sufism grew out of the Koran. This was very tersely expressed by Abul Khayer, the earliest

1. (i) Widgery—Comparative Study of Religion, p. 181.

(ii) Lammens—Islam and the Psychology of the Musalman, p. 112

doctor of Sufism, when he said that Sufism would be found in the 8/7th chapter (i. e. unwritten chapter) of the Koran<sup>1</sup>. If Sufism and Islam were one and the same, innumerable Sufi leaders like Mansur and Suhrawardi, Shams Tabriz and Fazalulla, would not have been tortured to death for preaching the truth of Sufism<sup>2</sup>. Even as late as the 18th century, Sarmad, the chief of the Sufis of India, was beheaded by Aurangzeb for holding views which were supposed to be inconsistent with the Koran<sup>3</sup>.

Yet all is not said, when it is said that the important topics of Sufism (Absolute, Soul and Love) are absent in the Koran. The philosophy of the Semitic people is such that it gives little scope for the development of Sufism which aims at the at-one-ment of God and Soul.

It is not the fault of the Koran that Sufism finds no prominent mention in it. For the Koran is the first book written in the Arabic language<sup>4</sup>. It had not the benefit of any written book whatsoever, not to speak of any book on philosophy. On the other hand, the Gatha had the benefit of the age-old Rigveda whose earlier portion is the joint heritage of the Hindus and the Parsis. Even at the dawn of history the Rigveda attempted to solve the problem of Being and Becoming in the famous Nasadiya Sukta (10-129). In the Vishnu Sukta (1-154), in the three steps of Vishnu, we see clearly the three stages of the Hegelian dialectics,—Thesis, Antithesis and Synthesis—which is the last word of philosophy on the problem of creation.

This accounts for the absence of a philosophical outlook in the Koran. "European readers of the Koran cannot fail

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1. Nicholson—Studies in Islamic Mysticism, p. 57
  2. Browne—Literary History of Persia, Vol I. p. 423
  3. Abdul Hakim—Metaphysics of Rumi, p. 137
  4. (i) Gibb—Arabic Literature, p. 15  
(ii) Browne—Literary History of Persia, Voll, p. 271





to be struck by its author's vacillation in dealing with the greatest problems. He himself was not aware of these contradictions, nor were they a stumbling block to his devout followers, whose simple faith accepted the Koran as the word of God. But the rift was there, and soon produced far-reaching results<sup>1</sup>. It may also be remembered that a correct interpretation of the Koran is extremely difficult. "An Arabic text contains only seventy five per cent of the meaning, and the remaining twenty-five per cent has to be supplied by the reader"<sup>2</sup>. Nicholson, the highest authority on Arabic culture, states the Koran to be "a very quicksand of contradictory notions, expressed in language that is often vague and obscure"<sup>3</sup>.

It was therefore, almost impossible to make out anything of the philosophy of the Koran, till Ghazzali, a worthy descendant of Zarathustrian forefathers came to the rescue, and explained matters with the help of his innate Iranian philosophy<sup>4</sup>.

On the other hand Iran was rich in philosophy. She had her share in the Brahmvada of the Upanishads—the very word Brahma being used in the Gatha (48-8, 50-7). In the Sassanian period we find subtle discussion going on about creation and God. "There are some who believe in only one God, some teach that He possesses contrary qualities ; others say that He does not possess them ; some admit that He is omnipotent ; others deny that He has power over everything ; some believe that the world and everything contained therein have been created ; others think that all the things are not created, and there are some others who maintain that the world has been made *ex nihilo* ; according to others, God has

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1. Nicholson—*Mystics of Islam*, p. 5

2. Gibb—*Arabic Literature*, p. 13

3. Nicholson—*Personality in Sufism*, p. 7

4. Zwemer—*A Muslim Seeker after God* p. 30

drawn it out from a pre-existing matter"<sup>1</sup>. Iran's love of philosophy found expression in its establishment of a university at Jund-i-Shahpur specially for the cultivation of Greek philosophy.

The deficiency in philosophical outlook is not peculiar to Koran alone. This deficiency, the Koran shares along with the scriptures of the other two Semitic religions, Judaism and Christianity. The theory of creation as outlined in the Semitic scriptures does not support the ideal of at-one-ment of man and God.

About the process of creation these are the three main theories :

आरंभवाद—the theory of generation

परिणामवाद—the theory of transformation

विवर्तवाद—the theory of transposition

Arambha Vada means creation out of nothing. "God said 'let there be light' and there was light." This is what Arambha Vada says. This is the accepted view of the Semitic people.

The Vedanta does not subscribe to it. For the material of the universe does not come from outside of Brahma, because there cannot be anything which is outside of Brahma. That would destroy the infinitude of Brahma. The material of the universe also comes out of Brahma himself, just as the cobweb comes out from within the spider. This is tantamount to saying that the universe is part of Brahma, that (a part of) Brahma transforms itself into the universe. This is roughly the view of the Vedanta, as explained by Ramanuja.

Sankara raises the objection that Brahma cannot be divided into parts, and that Brahma being immutable, there cannot be any transformation or change in him. The transformation is only apparent, just as when a rope appears to be

1. Casartelli —Philosophy of Mazda Yasnian Religion, p. 21

a snake. The rope does not change into a snake, it continues to be the same old rope as it had been. Yet a snake has made its appearance ( to some men ). Similarly Brahma does not transform itself as the universe, yet there is the appearance of the universe. This is called विवर्त (transposition), existence of Brahma in a different way (in plain words, misapprehension) Brahma continues to be the same old Brahma—only to some it appears to be the Universe. The Universe is not created at all, there is only an appearance of it.

The difference between Parinama and Vivarta is much too subtle a problem to be handled by a layman like me. Roughly speaking, Vivarta may be considered to be that exceptional variety of transformation, where the original Substance remains unaffected in spite of the transformation.

The point that is worthy of note and that alone which concerns us most in the present discussion, is that according to the Vedanta, the Universe (mind and matter) has emanated out of Brahma, and may go back to him. Man can achieve at-one-ment with God.

The universe evolved out of Brahma, in five succeeding stages—Soul, Super-Mind, Mind, Life and Matter (the five Kosas or planes of existence)<sup>1</sup> and would go back to Him in the reverse order. Life evolved out of dead matter, and mind (consciousness) out of Life. Super-mind (the sense of oughtness) evolved out of mind. Man stands at this stage of

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1. अन्नं प्राण-मनो-बुद्धिर्, आनन्दश्चेति पञ्चते ।

कोषास् तैर् आवृत् स्वात्मा विस्मृत्या सृष्टिं व्रजेत् ॥

In the Avesta (Yasna 17) these five Koshas are called five fires viz.

(1) Berejo Savangh (2) Vohu frayan.

(3) Urvazista (4) Vazista and (5) Spenista (Bilimoria—Zarathos -ti Rahbar p. 87.)

These Koshas (sheaths) are called fire, because the inmost content (viz Brahma) is resplendant (vide also Casertelli—Philosophy of Mazda Yasnian Religion, p. 140)

evolution. It is his business to evolve the Soul (to make patent all that lies latent in the Soul, as his ideal) and thereby unite with God. This is the philosophy that underlies both Vedanta and Sufism.

If man is not an emanation from God, if he is merely a creature, created out of nothing, then there is a lacuna between man and God, which can never be bridged, and there can never be perfect unity between man and God.

The Parinama theory provides for such at-one-ment, while the Arambha theory does not. This is why Mansur gave his life for the acceptance of the Parinama theory (unity of the essence of man and God). The An al Haq of Mansur means that, and nothing but that. For the Sufi is a Bhakti Yogi. He is not a Jnana Yogi (of the type of Sankara), and does not think of merger in Brahma. He thinks of the unification of the two in love (सामस्य, and not तादात्म्य). This is what the Sufi has been doing since the days of the Rigveda, and this is why the Rigveda calls the Cisti Bhrigus (Iranians) to be dualists—believers in the existence of two persons (the Devotee and the Deity), even in the stage of emancipation.

(1) द्विता यद् ईम् कीस्तासो अभियवो

नमस्यन्त उपवोचन्त भृगवः ॥

( Rigveda 1-127-7 )

(2) इमं विधन्तो अपां सधस्थे

द्विता दधुर भृगवो विश्व आयोः

( Rigveda 2-4-2 )

It takes two to make love (just as to make quarrel), and the Bhrigus are called द्वित (dualists), because they believed eternal verities to be two (viz. Lover and the Beloved), unlike the Jnana Yogins who take the Ultimate Reality to be one only, viz. Brahma or the Absolute.

Ramanuja upholds the doctrine of the ultimate reality of the human soul. According to him, Bhakta and Bhagavan

(Worshipper and the Worshipped=Devotee and God), are inter-dependent terms. One cannot be conceived without the other. This is the view-point also of the Bhargava Veda (Avesta). It is not unlikely that on account of this preference for the philosophy of the Bhargava Veda, Ramanuja's family came to be called Asuri<sup>1</sup> (fond of Ahura-cult) There is no doubt about his appreciation of the Panca-ratra sect.

Of course as in Ramanuja, so in the Gatha, this tinge of Duality does not assail the basic non-duality (Adwaita) of Brahma. Only in his personal aspect (सगुणभाव) as Iswara, there is scope for such duality. Even therein, the ecstasy of love, is calculated to sublimate this duality and blend the Lover and the Beloved into one. This is called सामरस्य (sameness of feeling) by the Vaisnavas.

Madhusudan Saraswati, the illustrious vedantic sage of Bengal, describes very beautifully the ascension to Samarasya in three stages of transition, viz. from Him (third person) to You (second person), and from You to I (first person)

तस्यवाहम्, तवैवाहम्, त्वम् एवाहम् इति त्रिधा

The first stage is "I am *His*"; the second stage is "I am *Yours*"; and the final stage is "I am *You*".

[ We may compare such expressions as (1) *He* (God) is supreme over all and (2) *Thy* will be done and (3) I and He (My Father) are one—implying greater and greater intimacy ]

While Sankaracarya prescribes निदिध्यासन (meditation of identity), Ramanuja prescribes सामरस्य (Rapture of Feeling) to be the method for the Unity with Brahma. Those people who forget this distinction, fight shy of the word Brahma, lest the conception of Brahma ( i. e. Non-Duality ) should subvert Bhakti Yoga ( the possibility of worship ). They try to explain away Brahma from the Gatha, by translating it

1. Prajnananda—वेदान्त दर्शनर इतिहास ।





as Prayer, Law, or Glory. They overlook that Zravana Akarana is an Avestic conception. The Cistis knew better than that. The Dabistan speaks of the Zarathustrian mystic, that "when he is bathed in devotion, he is so intoxicated with divine wisdom that he thinks himself one with the Divine"<sup>1</sup> This is the Sama-rasya of Ramanuja. In love there is a complete metamorphosis of the human soul. The man who had all along been thinking of his own interests only, and regarding others as merely instrumental to his own happiness, suddenly finds the centre of gravity shifted to another point, and considers himself happy only in administering to the happiness of another person. It is herein that the distinction between sensuality and love lies, though from outward appearance alone, one is likely to be mistaken for the other. One is based on self-indulgence and the other on self-sacrifice. In both there is a feeling of want. But while in Sensuality, the desire is to grab, in Love, the desire is to give. One is indicative of the poverty of the soul, and the other, of its wealth. We shall fail to appreciate the glory of the religion of Atharvan of Zarathustra, until we see that it is based on the wealth of the soul, on Urvajima and Sabas. It is the fervour of Love that makes Self-surrender (Khetwa-vadata) possible. Until that boiling point is reached, one may utter with his lips "Thy will be done", but the heart does not respond ; it inclines to say "My will be fulfilled". It is in the intoxication of Love, that one loses his will. He has then no wish of his own left to him ; rather the only wish that he then entertains, is how to give effect to the wish of the Beloved. Thus Khetwa-vadata solves one of the greatest riddles of the Universe, viz. how to go back to Unity, out of the realm of Duality. If the human being has freedom of will, then there are two persons—God and Man—each having a separate will. If the human being has not got freedom of

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1. Widgery—Comparative Study of Religions, p. 75.



will, there cannot be any moral life at all ; for there is no sense is asking a man to go to the right, if he has not got the freedom to go to the right, and must needs go to the left. Zarathustra is the stoutest champion of the moral life and so he says that man has got freedom of will ये ने उसेन चोरेत् स्पेन् चा अस्पेन् चा (Yas 45-9) यथा वरेनें वसाओ दायेन्ते (Yas 31-11) As a matter of fact, doctrine of the freedom of the will is such a prominent feature of Mazda Yasna, that the Kadiriya school of the Muslim Philosophers, who upheld the doctrine of the Freedom of the Will, were nicknamed as Majusis or Magians (Zarathustrians)<sup>1</sup>. Yet the duality (of wills) cannot be the last word of life. The duality has got to be transcended. In the ultimate reckoning, there is no scope for "Two" in the Universe. The Uni-verse is a Universe and not a multi-verse. It sprang out of the One, and will go back to the One ; not unconsciously like dead matter, for that is death, but consciously like a Saint, which is Eternal life (Ameretatat). Khetwavadata makes this possible. Zarathustra leads the way to that state—अत् रातां ज़रथुस्त्रो (Yas 32-14)

Yet it is not a merger in Brahma. It is the position of at-one-ment (one-in-two). "Sweet love were slain could difference be abolished". "As in the love of man and woman, so in a great friendship, the completest identification of interests and aims, does not merge the friends in one ; the most perfect alter ego must remain an alter, if the experience is to exist, if the joy of an intensified life is to be tasted at all<sup>2</sup>. "It takes two, not only to make a bargain, it takes two to love and to be loved", Zarathustra points out the status in क्या मज़्दा जरेम् चरानी (Yas 44-17) and in fellow-ship ( हाकुरेनेम् ) with Mazda (Yas 33-9).

And this is the Dualism of the Kisti Bhrigus, (the Cistis of the Gatha).

1. Browne—Literary History of Persia, vol 1, p. 282.

2. Pringle-Pattison—The idea of God, p. 289.

Gatha solves the highest riddle of life, viz. how to reconcile the freedom of the human soul, with the omnipotence of Mazda. It thus offers the best religion; a better one may not be conceived. For it describes these doctrines [Freedom of the will, Self-surrender, at-one-ment (one-in-two state) ] in so many words, and does not, like most scriptures, leave them to be inferred or gathered from many books.

The conception of Brahma (the Absolute) is so fundamental to the religion of the Gatha that a few more words on the point may not be considered a tautology.

Not only does the Vahma of the Gatha correspond to the Brahma of the Upanisads, but the Gatha also explains the conception almost in the same terms as the Upanisads.

Brahma is the source of the universe, and therefore the source of all the contrary qualities that may be found in all the manifold objects of the universe. This is how Bradley says that all contradictions are reconciled in the Absolute. Then again Brahma is a conscious Entity, and not an unconscious Substance.

The idea is very beautifully expressed in the following Rik of the Gatha.

कुप्रा तोइ अरेद्रा मज्झदा,  
 योइ व'हेडश् वएदेना मनंहो ।  
 से'गहूश् रएखेनाओ,  
 अस्पेन् चीत् साद्राचीत् चखूयो उषेउरु ।  
 नए चीम् तेम् अन्मेम् यूष्मत् वएदा,  
 अषा अथा नाओ ध्राज्ज्दम् ॥

Yasna 34-7

[ Who is that Great one, O Mazda, who through strength of character and wealth of sagacity, is above the reach of all Duality (the duality of good and evil) ? I do not know that which is other than You.]

रघ्न=Great (Rigveda 2-12-6)

The main two ideas contained in this Rik are

- (1) Brahma is above all Duality
- (2) Brahma is the only Substance (the sole Reality).

[ Mind and Matter which constitute the whole of our universe, are derived from Brahma, and may be called 'Substance' only in a secondary sense ]

We would understand this Rik more easily, if we take the help of the exegesis of Jalaluddin Rumi. He says

चुन गुल अज़ खार अस्त् ओ खार अज़ गुल चिरा ।

हर दो दर जंग अन्द ओ अन्दर माजरा ॥ Masnavi 1-2472

[ The thorn is the rival of the rose. But both of them are derived from the same sap. When one reaches the sap, the contradiction altogether vanishes ]

The universe consists of manifold objects. But Brahma is above the diversity, manifested by the manifold objects.

खुद हम उ आब अस्त ओ हम साकि ओ मस्त ।

हर सि एक शूद चुन तिलिस्मे तु शिकस्त ॥ Masnavi, 2-717

[When you prick the bubble you will see that the three—the saki, the tippler, and the wine—are all one ]

Wine is "Matter", which is enjoyed (cognised) by the Mind. The drinker is the Mind, who enjoys (cognises) Matter, The Saki is the great Designer who brings together the wine and the tippler.

It is asserted here, that (1) Matter (unconscious substance) (2) Mind (conscious substance) and (3) Brahma, these three form one Substance—i. e. these three are the different modes of one and the same substance.

This is a celebrated doctrine of the Vedanta and is known by the name of Trikuti-bhanga (त्रिकुटीभङ्ग = reduction of three into one). But how could two contrary substances like Matter and Mind be reduced to one substance, and then integrated with an unknown Substance like Brahma ?

Mind is a conscious substance, and Brahma also, as the one

root of all the individual finite minds, (i. e. as Paramatma), is a conscious substance. There is thus not much difficulty in compounding these two. But what about matter—crude, extensive, tangible matter, devoid of all consciousness, like the tree or the stone ? How can matter and mind, so dissimilar as they are, be considered to be different phases of the same substance ?

No doubt Science has now broken up tangible matter into a vortex of intangible force (the play of protons and electrons), But the vast gap has not yet been crossed—the gap between the conscious and the unconscious.

Vedanta however argues like this. It is a fact that we live within the universe ( i. e. we are objects in the universe, along with other objects), but it is also equally true that the universe lives within us. We do not know what the actual nature of a tree or a stone is. We only know the image of the tree or the stone, as is present in our mind. And the image does not always correspond with the thing. We call the rose red, and the grass green. But there is no redness in the thing we call rose, and no greenness in the thing we call grass. Those objects only set up light vibrations of certain length, which our minds interpret as red or green. Redness and greenness exist in our minds, and not in those things. The universe we know, is *our* universe. We do not know any universe that is not in our mind. What we call "matter" is nothing but the image of matter, present to our mind. And an Image is nothing but a thought, i. e. a mode of consciousness. Matter is thus reduced to a mode of consciousness.

The subject is abstruse, and I am not competent to explain it. Those who are interested in the matter would do well to consult Bradley's famous book, *Appearance and Reality*".

The doctrine appeared as Vijnana Vada ( विज्ञान वाद ) in



Buddhist Philosophy. A variety of this doctrine<sup>2</sup> was taught by Berkeley in England. Kant welcomed the idea in Germany and subsequently Hegel and Fichte developed it. They chiselled out the non-essential and the inconsistent factors, and established the philosophy that is known as Ideal Monism (which should more properly be called Spiritual Monism). It is the accepted philosophy of the day.

Broadly speaking, this philosophy holds that a Conscious Entity is the source of the universe, and that Mind and Matter are the two modes through which It expresses itself. Thus in a sense, it may be claimed that there is nothing existent in the universe except Brahma ( the Absolute ).

And this is the philosophy that Atharvan Zarathustra teaches when he says, "I do not know any thing which is other than you". (Vide also Yasna 33-10)

[ Consistently with the Gathic idea, the Personal and the Impersonal aspects, the Immanent and the Transcendent aspects, the Mazda and the Brahma aspects, are blended together. But that need not cause a confusion, and detract from the value of this Rik, for they are the two sides of the same coin, reverse and converse ]

And no Philosophy higher than this, is known to us.

The Iranian could not easily forget this Philosophy—the more so as a better one was not forthcoming. And within two hundred years of the battle of Nahavand, the Iranian mind spoke out in the trumpet voice of Mansur, the gist of this basic Gathic philosophy, in the celebrated dictum, 'An al Huq', and it is being repeated by the Iranians, in tune with Hafiz.

कशद् नक्से अज-अल-हक बर जमिन खुन ।

चुन मनसुर गर कशि बर दासम इम शब ॥

[ My blood will go on drawing on ground the figure of An-al-Huq if you kill me on the gibbet this night ]

The Arambha theory is inconsistent with the idea of at-one-ment with God, (which is the only objective of the Sufi's life) and so Koranic philosophy could hardly develop into Sufism. Sufism is nothing but the religion of the Gatha clothed in Arabic nomenclature. The Arabic terminology was necessary for its acceptance by the people who had become very much Arabicised. But that does not change its original Iranian genus. An Indian does not cease to be an Indian, simply because of his putting on European costume. The Gathic Cisti did not cease to be Gathic, even when it used Arabic terminology.

The Iranian wanted to avoid a direct clash with Islam, partly because the political situation of the time required it and partly because the Iranian is very catholic in his outlook and does not bear any ill-will towards Islam. He at once realised that Islam could easily be made subservient to Sufism, and that the use of Arabic terms suited that purpose well. The Iranian performed his task so wonderfully well, that the Arab hardly realised that by adopting Sufism, he was relegating formal Islam to a subordinate position, and he very cheerfully accepted Sufism.

We do not mean to say that Sufism cannot be elicited out of the Koran. That it can, has been proved satisfactorily by the skill of Jalal, the prince of the Sufis. All that we intend to say is that Sufism is pre-eminently the product of the Gatha, and not of the Koran. Even Browne admits, rather unwillingly, that "the beginning of Sufism may go back to Sassanian times" (i. e. pre-Muslim period)<sup>1</sup>.

By contriving the Sufi cult, Iran came back to her own religion. It threw off the yoke of Arabia in the sphere of religion and attained independence. The victory of Nahavand was nullified so far as the religious sphere was concerned. Those people who think that Islam has conquered Mazda

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1. Browne—*Literary History of Persia*, vol. I, p. 168

Yasna, take only a superficial view of the matter. The truth lies the other way. It is Mazda Yasna which has conquered Islam. A number of people may have gone over from the fold of Mazda Yasna to that of Islam (they may come back again as easily), but Mazda Yasna did not give up any of its fundamental principles in order to suit itself to Islam. On the other hand Islam underwent a complete metamorphosis on coming in contact with Mazda Yasna. It adopted all the fundamental categories of Mazda Yasna—Absolute, Soul and Love. Post-Sufi Islam is altogether different from pre-Sufi Islam. A caterpillar has changed into a butterfly. The credit for this beautiful development is entirely due to the skill of the Iranian. The Iranian is a great magician ; as a matter of fact the word 'magic' itself is derived from 'Magha'.

The religion of the Gatha falls into two parts : the Cisti and the Dina. The Cisti deals with fundamental principles such as Brahma, Soul and Love. The Dina deals with matters of secondary importance such as monotheism, iconoclasm or caste-equality. The former is esoteric Mazda Yasna, and the latter is exoteric Mazda Yasna. The former is the substance and the latter is the form of Mazda Yasna. One is the flesh and the other is the skin of the fruit.

Post-exilic Judaism was materially influenced by Mazda-Yasna, and Islam is only a modification of post-exilic Judaism. Thus the Dina portion of Islam agrees very much with the Dina portion of Mazda Yasna. Whatever difference there was in the Dina portion, the Iranians chose to overlook it. Islam entirely lacked the Cisti portion. Mazda Yasna furnished this essential portion to Islam. Islam borrowed it in toto and gave to it the name of Sufism. The Cisti of the Gatha became the Sufism of Islam and has become an intrinsic part of it, "a vital element in Islam", as Nicholson expresses it. "Sufism is such a vital element in Islam that without some understanding of its ideas, and of the forms which

they assume, we should seek in vain to penetrate below the surface of Muhammadian religious life" <sup>1</sup>

If Sufism is taken away from Islam, as the Wahabi movement seems to aim at, Islam would lose much of its grandeur and dwindle into an insignificant parochial religion. Thus the debt of Islam to Iran is irrepayable.

Iran lost her independence in the battle of Nahavand in 642 A. D. Within about a hundred years we find Sufism starting its course. Ibrahim Adham (died in 775 A. D.) was the son of a Zarathustrian prince of Balkh. He began to propagate Sufi doctrines. Jalal says of him that he was very much influenced by spiritual India (Masnavi 4-3080). This is very natural, for Balkh (Bactria) is only about 200 kilometres from Kabul, and even as late as 962 A. D. when Alaptagin, the grandfather of Sultan Mamud, occupied Ghazni, a Hindu prince sat on the throne of Kabul<sup>2</sup>. So much Hindu influence still prevailed in Afghanistan that Sultan Mamud thought it fit to put a Sanskrit translation of the Kalima on his silver coins as अव्यक्तम् ( ब्रह्म ) एकम्—महम्मद अवतार<sup>3</sup>. He had to subdue the rebellion of Niyaltigin with the help of his Hindu general Tilak<sup>4</sup>. There were innumerable Siva Temples in Afghanistan, Baluchistan, Swat valley and even in Khotan and Persia, when Huen Tsiang came to India in the 7th century A. D.<sup>5</sup>.

The next famous Sufi doctor was Baezid of Bistam. He flourished about 100 years later (died in 875 A. D.) He used to say that Khoda lives within his Jubba (cloak)—Masnavi (4-2125), and that his standard is broader than that of

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1. Nicholson—Studies in Islamic Mysticism. preface (p. vi).
  2. Cambridge Shorter History of India, p. 962.
  3. Ananda Bazar Patrika—12-12-1965.
  4. Tarachand—Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, p. 136.
  5. Tarachand—Influence of Islam on Indian Culture p. 7.

Muhammad<sup>1</sup>. Hallaz Mansur came to the scene shortly afterwards (died in 922 A. D.) His Sufism was much more pronounced and he declared himself able to compose verses equal to those of the Koran<sup>2</sup>. He was put to the gibbet for proclaiming the truth—An al Haq. Jalal laments his death.

चुन कलम दर दस्ते घद्दारी बुवद ।

बीगुमान् मनसूर बर दारी बुवद ॥ Masnavi 2-1368

[ When a traitor wields the pen (of command) a Mansur (apostle) is sure to be killed on the cross. ]

Hafiz pays his homage to Mansur in his immortal lines.

क़साद नक़शे अन-अल-हक़ बर ज़मीन ख़ुन ।

चु मनसूर गर कुशी बर दारम इम शब ॥

[If you kill me, like Mansur, on the cross this night, my blood will go on drawing the figures of An al Haq on the ground as it flows.]

The grandfathers, both of Baezid and Mansur were Zarathustrians<sup>3</sup>.

Junaid another great Sufi doctor of this period (died in 939 A. D.) also came of Zarathustrian stock. But greater than he was Abul Khayer (967-1049) who was born of a famous Zarathustrian family of Khorasan. Abul Khayer consolidated the Sufi system by stating the fundamental principles of Sufism in a hand book of Persian verses. This may be said to be the earliest scripture of Sufism and the prototype of the famous Masnavi of Jalal. He it was who said that Sufism may be found in the 8/7th chapter of the Koran<sup>4</sup>.

1. Lammens—Islam, p. 125

2. Browne—Literary History of Persia, vol I, p. 435

3. Browne—Literary History of Persia. vol I, Chap. xiii.

4. Nicholson—Studies in Islamic Mysticism, p. 76.



In the next century Imam Ghazzali (1058-1112 A.D.) the greatest of the Sufi philosophers came to the field. His arguments are so logical that European scholars freely admit him to be the equal of St Augustine<sup>1</sup>, Origen<sup>2</sup> and Descartes<sup>3</sup>.

Ghazzali had been born in a Zarathustrian family<sup>4</sup>. His position in the Islamic world is supreme, for he has been called the second Prophet of Islam<sup>5</sup>. The title of Huzzat-i-Islam (Proof of Islam) was conferred on him<sup>6</sup>, which implies that before Ghazzali wrote his *Kimiya-i-Saadat*, Islam did not possess any book which could support its underlying principles by rational argument. Ghazzali was a great Sufi<sup>7</sup> and thanks to his sagacity, Sufism now obtained a firm footing and no body could think of impeaching it on the pretext of defence of Islam.

The torch of Sufism was kept burning in the next period by two great doctors Fariduddin Attar (1155-1222) and Shams-i-Tabriz. Both of them came from Zarathustrian stock. It was from Shams-i-Tabriz that the great Jalal learnt the secrets of Sufism. Jalal (1207-1273) is the prince of the Sufis. In him Sufism reached its highest perfection and his *Masnavi* is the holy Scripture of the Sufi religion. Jalaluddin Rumi came from the purest Iranian stock, the royal family of Khwarzem (Khiva) [Claud Field—*Persian Literature* p. 117] From Ibrahim Adham (777 A. D) to Jalaluddin Rumi (1273 A. D) Sufism was handed down from generation to generation by illustrious and saintly sons of devout Zarathustrian ancestors.

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1. Zwemer—A Muslim Seeker After God, p. 20.
  2. Zwemer—A Muslim Seeker After God, p. 147
  3. Lewes—History of Philosophy-Vol II, p. 50
  4. Zwemer—A Muslim Seeker after God, p. 53
  5. Browne—Literary History of Persia, vol II-176
  6. Browne—Literary History of Persia, vol. I, p. 293
  7. Cash—The Expansion of Islam-p. 116

Sufi tradition invariably attributes the promulgation of Sufism to the magnetic prophet Khizir. "He is a mysterious sage endowed with immortality, who is said to enter into conversation with wandering Sufis and impart to them his God-given knowledge".<sup>1</sup> He is not a Semitic Prophet. His name does not occur in the genealogy of the Prophets in the Bible or the Koran. He is particularly associated with Iran. All Sufi poets get their inspiration from him. He is known as Pir-i-Sabj (the green-mantled Prophet). On a solitary hill about 4 miles from Shiraj, there is a shrine assigned to this Baba Kuhl (Patron Saint of the Hill). Hafiz engaged himself there in devotional prayer for forty days and nights, and obtained from him a cup of nectar that made him an immortal poet.<sup>2</sup> His rank is superior to that of all other prophets; for he is a Prophet of Prophets, having been entrusted with the charge of guiding Prophet Moses<sup>3</sup>. The Koran does not mention him by name but refers to him in the parable of Khizir [Sura 18 (the Cave)=verses 59-81]. Moses had not the patience to learn all that Khizir could teach him. He could not obtain the fish, which he was in quest of. That this allusion in the Koran relates to Super Prophet Khizir, is admitted by all annotators<sup>4</sup>. Jalal also confirms the tradition and says :

सब्र कुन बर कारे खिज़्र ए बी निफाक ।

ता नगुय्यद् खिज़्र "रव हज़ा फ़ेराक" ॥

Masnavi 1-2970

[ Have patience with the sincere prophet Khizir, so that he may not say "begone, this is our parting point". ]

1. Nicholson—The Mystics of Islam, p. 127

2. Claud Field—Persian Literature, p. 217

3. Lammens—Islam and the Psychology of the Musalman, p. 131

4. Sale—Koran, p. 222

Rodwell says that the name Khidir (=Khizir) is formed out of Jethro<sup>1</sup>. And Jethro may be a shortened form of Zarathustra for all we know. Thus Muslim tradition seems to point to Zarathustra as the source of Sufism.

We may now look to the Vedic tradition. It has already been stated that "Kisti" is the vedic word for Avestic "Cisti". The Rigveda says that the Bhrigus were famed as Kistis (Cistis)

द्विता यद् ईम् कीस्तासो अभिद्यवो,  
नमस्यन्त उपवोचन्त भृगवः ।

Rigveda 1-127-7

[ When the illustrious Bhrigus—Dualists and Cistis as they are—respectfully belaud this (Agni) ]

It thus appears that the Bhrigus were protagonists of (1) Duality (i.e. Bhakti Yoga, implying the Duality of the worshipper and the worshipped, as against the Non-Duality of the Brahma of the Janan Yogin) and of (2) Cisti (i. e. unity through Love, as against Seraoshem or formal worship).

It is thus reasonable to hold that Bhrigu (the Prophet of Ahura-worship) promulgated the Cisti cult. And when Zarathustra says that Urvazima or Love is the special feature of the new religion, (Yasna 32-1) we may reasonably conclude that the Khizir of the Sufi tradition, and the Bhrigu of the Vedic tradition, are one and the same Prophet, and that both of them are no other than Zarathustra himself. A pun on the word "Zarat-Vastra" (Zarat=Harit, Skt=green,—Vastra=garment) may explain the green mantle of Khizir. It is worthy of note that Khizir is immortal according to Iranian tradition, and that Parsu Rama (Bhrigu) is immortal according to Indian tradition.

As the name 'Zarathustra' was not palatable to the rigid mollas, and Jalal wanted the Masnavi to be accepted

1. Rodwell—Koran, p. 186 ( foot note )

by them, he does not mention Zarathustra by name, as the source of his inspiration but gives to him the fanciful name of Husham-ud-Din ( The Sword of Religion ). He offers apology for this forced disregard and says,

मुर्ग ओ माही दानन्द आन अयहामरा ।  
कि सितुदम मुजम्मल इन खुशानामरा ॥  
ता बर उ आह-ए हसुदान कम वज्द ।  
ता खियाल-अशरा ब दन्दान कम गज्द ॥

Masnavi 3-2117

[ Even the birds and the fish know that I belauded that Holy Prophet, but in praising him I resorted to irony, so that the malicious might not curse him, and gnash their teeth at him ].

The name of Khizir however (on account of the reference in the Koran) was not repugnant and Jalal could easily ask the Iranians to submit to Khizir.

चुन गिरफ्तत पीर हीन तस्लीम शव ।  
हमचु मुसा जीरे हुक्मे खिज्र रव ॥

Masnavi 1-2969

[ Like Moses, submit to the guidance of Khizir. ]

And Jalal expresses his deep reverence for Khizir, by naming Masnavi as the "Elixir of Khizir".

आबे खिज्र अज जुए नुत्के औलिया ।  
मीखुरीम—अय तिश्ने घाफेल बि-आ ॥

Masnavi 3-4302

[ Let us now drink the Elixir of Khizir from the stream kept flowing by the kindly Sufi saints. ]

Ab-i-Khizir (Love of God) is the only drink that the human soul really pines for. For that alone, and nothing else, can satisfy his spiritual thirst. Man knows it not, and therefore wildly runs after this object or that, thinking

that it would quell his thirst, and comes back disappointed from every quarter.

In his bewilderment man has forgotten himself and forgotten what he is really seeking. This is how he makes a search in every place and does not find it. He seeks it in pomp and power, in fame and glory, in woman and wine. He ferrets for the lost gem in all the wrong places and comes back disgruntled. If he sits down coolly, and gazes at his inmost self, he will discover that it is only Ab-i-Khizir that he has been searching through out all his life.

If he really wanted all the other things that he came by during his life's journey, they would certainly have slaked his thirst. He would not have been disappointed when he obtained them and remained as thirsty as before.

It is only Ab-i-Khizir that he is thirsting for

मय रखु कि शेख ओ काजी, ओ मुक्ति ओ मुहत्तसिव ।

चुन नेक बिनगरि, हमे तजबिर-ए मय कुनन्द ॥

Hafiz—Ode 133

[ Everybody—Shekh or Kazi, and Mufti or Muhtasib-drinks wine ; only they drink it by fake, (cannot procure the right brand, and sip an imitation stuff.) ]

Every one seeks the Love of God, but he seeks it unawares (i. e. without knowing that it is the Love of God that he is seeking). That is the rub. Let him seek it consciously.

Love of God is so precious that the soul cannot do without it. Just as Kabir expresses it.

भक्ति पियारी रामकी, जैसी पियारी आग ।

सारा गांव जरि मुआ, बहरि ले आये माँग ॥

Vijak—11-267

[ Fire is so precious, that even if the whole town has been reduced to ashes by it on the previous evening, people



would go out the next morning to fetch fire. Love of God is equally dear. ]

It is this song (Gatha) of Love, that the Sufi chants to Iran. Sufism has been the theme of her philosophers and the dream of her poets since the days of Zarathustra. A thousand years or so, is too short a period to dry up the sweet stream that has been flowing in the nation for six thousand years. The stream will again flow in full force and the aspirants of Iran will again sip the Ab-i-Khiz'r, from the cup of Khizir himself.

हल्का-ए पीर-ए मघान-अम, अज् अजल दर गोश अस्त ।

बर हम्ानीम कि वूदीम [ओ हमान खाहद वूद ॥

Hafiz—Ode 175

[ "We are the slaves of the Prophet of the Magha, since the beginning. We still are what we had been, and we shall ever continue to be so." ]

Devotion to Atharvan Zarathustra does not stand in the way of Islam, as taught by Hazrat Muhammad. He said that Allah had sent Prophets to every country (Koran 10-48, 16-38), and those Prophets preached their message only in the language of that nation (Koran 14-4) and it is best that each nation would follow its own Scripture (Koran 45-27). But the erratic would accept only that much of the Koran as suits their purpose. These misguided people thought that they had got rid of idolatry by discarding the statue. But Idolatry changed its tactics and assumed a subtler form and decoyed them. Holocaust is the Idol that they worship with all their zeal and they mistake it for piety. They fail to see that this ghoul ousted God from his throne.

खानाह खालि कुन ज्ञ बुत ।

ता मन्जिले जानान शवद ।

कि इन हवस-नाकान दिल ओ जानरा,

जाय-इ दिगर मि कुनन्द ॥ Hafiz—Ode-182



[Make the heart free from all idols (coarse or fine—physical or mental). Otherwise God will have no room to sit there. ]

With the publication of the Masnavi, Sufism reached such a stage that it could defy the clamour of the fanatic mollahs. Jalal derides them by saying

मन अज्ञ कुरान मधुज्ञ रा बरदास्तम् ।

उस्तखान पीशे सगान अन्दाखतम्<sup>1</sup> ॥

[ I have taken the marrow out of the Koran and have thrown the bones to the dogs. ]

Masnavi is the despair of Islam. To accept it, is so admit the deficiency of the Arabic religion (and the necessity of recoupment from Iranian sources). To reject it, is to invite a greater frustration. It is tantamount to refusing the opportunity of getting an intimate experience of God—for that is the promise that the Cisti holds out.

सुरीदे पीरे मघानम् ज्ञ मन म रन्ज अय शेख ।

चेरा के वादेह् तु कर्दी व उ बजा आवर्द ॥ Hafiz

[I am the disciple of the Prophet of the Maghas. O Shekh, do not be annoyed on that account, for you do merely promise, while he alone can make realisation available. ]

The Muslim hesitated for a time and then succumbed to the greater spiritual force of the Masnavi and accepted it as the second Koran—as indispensable for the Musalman as the Koran is

मसनवी ए मौलवी ए मानवी ।

हस्त कुरान दर ज़बाने पहलवी ॥

[The spiritual Masnavi of the Maulavi (Maulana Jalal) is the Koran in Pahlavi.]

To the Sufi, however, the Masnavi is not the second, but

1. (i) अयोध्या सिंह—कबीर रचनावली, मुखबन्द

(ii) Claud Field—Persian Literature, p. 176

it is the first Scripture.<sup>1</sup> He is the devoted slave of Khizr and Khizr alone.

Masnavi is a wonderful \*book. It delineates the principles of Cisti so adroitly that a Muslim is led to accept them unconsciously, i. e. without suspecting that he is giving up the Semitic standpoint.

Take for instance the question of the immanence of God—the presence of God in every object. This is an important creed of the Cisti cult (Gatha 48-9). A necessary corollary that follows from it is that one may feel the presence of God in everything that he sees. Jalal states the truth in the following lines.

चुन मोहम्मद पाक शुद ज़ीन नार ओ दुद ।

हर कुजा रु कर्द वज्जे अल्लाह बुद ॥ Masnavi 1-1397

[ When Muhammad became free of fire and smoke (sensual impulses) wherever he looked up he saw the face of Allah. ]

This seemed to be a very natural state and irrefutable too. For none could have the audacity to say that Muhammad was the Prophet of God, and still he did not see the face of God.

Yet it is the same truth which Mansur wanted to teach by his celebrated dictum 'An al Haq.' What Mansur intended to say is that God is present everywhere, and therefore present within him too. The same truth was proclaimed by both the apostles of Sufism. But Mansur stated it very bluntly and Jalal did so very cleverly (by bringing Muhammad in the picture). On account of the difference in the mode of expression, Mansur was killed on the gibbet, and Jalal was accorded the honour of the Prophet.

मन चे गुयम वस्फे इन आलि जनाब ।

नीस्त पयघम्बर लीक दारद किताब ।

1. Ross—Persia, p. 132

[ Jalal performed the task of the Prophet—he brought a Scripture. ]

Jalal's skill made the Muslim accept the principle of the presence of God in man, without any question.

As another instance of the Sufi method of expansion of the Koran, we may take up the celebrated dictum 'La Ilahi il Allah'. Literally it means none is adorable except Allah. This is the basic formula of monotheism. To the Sufi, however, it has more meaning than that. 'Ilahi' for him means not 'worthy of adoration' but 'worthy of notice' (i. e. really existent). Thus to the Sufi, La Ilahi il Allah means that nothing really exists except Allah. The formula of monotheism ( एकेश्वरवाद ) has been turned into the formula of monism ( अद्वैतवाद )<sup>1</sup>. It is the same idea as the Vedanta expresses when it says

श्लोकार्धेन प्रवक्ष्यामि यद् उक्तं ग्रन्थकोटिभिः ।

ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन् मिथ्या जीवो ब्रह्मैव नापरः ॥

[ I shall tell you in a line the whole truth of the Vedanta—Brahma is real, and the world is unreal. ]

The astuteness of the Sufi serves to introduce Vedanta in the Koran. This is how Iqbal says "We find that the Persian, though he let the surface of his life become largely semiticised, quickly converts Islam to his own Aryan habit of thought"<sup>2</sup>.

With the help of the Cisti, the Iranian got the better of the Islam. For an idea cannot be killed by the sword ; it can be killed only by another idea. A philosophy may be refuted only by another philosophy. And the Arab was very helpless in the matter. For he had no philosophy worth the name. "The Arab discerns the trees very clearly, but not the wood"<sup>3</sup>.

1. Nicholson—The Mystics of Islam, p. 163

2. Iqbal—Development of Persian Metaphysics, p. 22

3. Nicholson—Studies in Islamic Mysticism, p. 163

The Arab had no way but to accept the philosophy of the Gatha. He heaved a sigh of relief when Imam Ghazzali brought the Cisti philosophy to his use, and conferred on him the titles of "Hazzat-i-Islam"<sup>1</sup> (Proof of Islam) and "the Second Prophet of Islam"<sup>2</sup>.

"The view of Jalaluddin Rumi is fundamentally the same as that of his illustrious predecessor, Ghazzali"<sup>3</sup>. What Ghazzali says in philosophic prose, Jalal repeats in romantic poetry.

No amount of argument can make the thorn the equal of the rose, and fire will be worshipped, since it is fire, to the exclusion of clay, as the blind poet Bassar used to say and was put to death for saying it<sup>4</sup>.

Yes, the Parsi worships before the Fire. The Christian uses the cross for aiding his concentration, and the Muslim turns to the West. If any symbol is to be used, there is no doubt that Fire is the best symbol. It burns away all impurities and its flame always points upwards. Similarly if any Kibla is to be used, the Sun is the best Kibla. Its resplendant orb is manifest to all. Thus the Aryas accepted Fire as the best of the symbols and Rigveda starts with the words अग्निम् ईडे पुरोहितम् [let us honour the Fire present before us.]

The rite was current when Zarathustra had flourished and he allowed it to continue. He accepted the custom, also because it acts as a prophylaxis to idolatry. The Fire silently declares that if any symbol is to be used, it should be immaterial Fire, and not the figure of a man or a beast. The image of the Golden Egg (i. e. a Ball of Fire), which

1. Zwemer—Ghazzali—A Muslim Seeker After God, p. 20

2. (i) Nicholson—Personality in Sufism, p. 20

(ii) Browne—Literary History of Persia, vol. II, p. 176

3. Abdul Hakim—Metaphysics of Rumi, p. 114

4. Browne—Literary History of Persia, vol I. p. 267.



the Vedic sages advised for meditating about God, has also the same end in view (viz. prevention of idolatry).

हिरण्यगर्भः समवर्तताग्रे,

भूतस्य जातः पतिर एकः आसीत् Rigveda 10-121-1

[ "In the beginning there was the Golden Egg. He was the Lord of all the worlds, as soon as He came to be" ]

The Bhagavata Purana, the best scripture on Bhakti Yoga, gives to it the name of ब्रह्म ज्योति (the Glow of Brahma)

सत्यम् ज्ञानम् अनन्तं यत् ब्रह्मज्योतिः सनातनम्

Bhagavat 10-28-15

[ Iswar is the glow of Brahma. He is true, infinite, and eternal. ]

Representation of Mazda, by a Flame of Fire is the idea of the Gathic religion. Thus when saint Ardaviraf was introduced into the presence of Mazda, he saw only 'a light' and not 'a body' "Maman am roshnai dit, af am tanu la dit" I saw only a light, but not a body<sup>1</sup>.

We find an echo of it, when Moses sees Jehovah as a Fire in the Bush (Koran 28-30) and prescribed that Fire should be kept burning continually on the altar (Levit—VI-12)<sup>2</sup>.

Of course the necessity of a symbol passes away when a man has learnt to see the face of God in every object.

किबलाह् ओ मेहराब ए मन ।

आबरुए दिलदार अस्त ओ बस् ।

कि इन दिले शुरिदारा

बा इन चे ओ बा आन चि कार ॥

Hafiz

[ The face of the Beloved is my Kibla, I have no need of any Kibla or pulpit. ]

1. Casertelli — Philosophy of Mazda Yasnian Religion. p. 27

2. Razvi — Parsis ( A People of the Book ), p. 97

Such a saint feels the presence of Mazda everywhere (कदा वएदा येज्जी चह्या क्षयथा Yasna 48-9) and attains that ecstasy which teaches him to forget all agonies

हर कि अज खुद शूद मुजरिद

दर तरिक-ए आशीकि ।

अज घम ओ दरद-अश् ची आगाहि

ओ बा दरमान ची कार ॥

Hafiz.

[ When one has separated himself from himself, what awareness has he of pain, and what need for a remedy ? ]

To this ecstasy, the Gatha gives the name of Kshnum (क्षुन्म् मज्झाओ वझाह Yasna 53-2.—The ecstasy of Mazda, the Brahma), It is however the Fire of Mazda, that leads one to this ecstasy and enables him to rise above himself.

याम् क्षुतेम् रानोइव्या दाओ

थवा आश्रा शुखा मज्झा ।

Yasna 51-9

So the Parsi will go on paying homage to the Fire of Mazda.

Mazda Yasna knew well how to grapple with the Semitic faiths. It implanted its own ideal on Judaism and made it a new Judaism. It implanted its ideal on Islam and made it a new Islam. It left Christianity alone, for Christianity is, to a large extent, the result of the impact of another Aryan religion (Buddhism) on the Semitics, through the agency of the Essenian monks<sup>1</sup>. Moreover Maha Ratu Zarathustra forestalled Jesus Christ by about four thousand years in all the four noble principles that are fundamental to the New Testament. These are (1) the golden rule of conduct—doing to others what one wishes to do to himself (2) purity of the motive, (on which depends the moral worth of any action) (3) the Fatherhood of God and (4) the emphasis on

1. (i) Dutt—Ancient India, vol. II p. 340

(ii) Gangaprasad—Fountainhead of Religions, p. 18

righteousness. We may look up Sukta 43-1 for the Golden Rule, Sukta 44-12 for the value of the motive, Sukta 45-11 for the Fatherhood of God and Sukta 32-5 for the importance of Rectitude in the matter of God realisation.

It is not unlikely that in the matter of its Trinity ( God—the Father, God—the Son, and God—the Holy Ghost) Christianity is to some extent indebted to Mazda-Yasna. The Holy Ghost becomes unmeaning unless it is understood as the Higher Self ( The Ideal Self, which is the seat of all our Ideals ). God is the source of all our Ideals, and the Higher Self which leads us on to their attainment, is our most valuable element. Without the elegance of his Ideals, man would be no better than an animal. Through our Ideals we are united to God, as by nothing else. Thus the Holy Ghost, whose function it is to unite man to God, would seem to be nothing else than the Ideal Self. Maha Ratu Zarathustra suggests the idea, when he solicits the advent of the Ideal Self ( Narois Naro—Yas 48-10 ). Thus for a clear conception of the Holy Ghost, ( if not for its inception) one may look up the Gatha. The idea of Trinity was adopted by the Christians in the fifth century A. D. i e. after they came in contact with the Zarathustrians.

Sufism marks the the victory of the Iranian mind over the Arabic. With the advent of the Masnavi, dogmatic Islam exhausted itself—such Islam as chose to put up a fight against the Cisti of the Gatha. “That Sufism dispensed with the religion of the Koran, is implied, if not expressed. It introduced an *entirely new* concept of God and a new standard of religious values”<sup>1</sup>.

As a matter of fact all that is glorious in Islam is the contribution of the Iranian mind. Three books are considered to be the three pillars of Islamic theology. They are considered indispensable for a proper understanding of the Koran.

1. O'Leary—Arabic Thought, p. 202.

These are (1) the Hadis of Al Bukhari (2) the Kiyas of Abu Hanifa and (3) the Tafsir of Ghazzali. And Bukhari, Hanifa and Ghazzali are all noble sons of Iran, and saturated with Gathic ideas. For a Muslim to seek to erase the imprint of the Iranian cult (as Dr Iqbal, in his impatience, is sometimes inclined to counsel) is as impossible as 'the attempt of a man to jump on to his own shoulder'—as Sayana expresses (न खलु निपुणोऽपि स्वं स्कन्धं आरोढुं प्रभवेत्—ऋग्वेद भाष्यभूमिका)

Since the publication of the Mansavi, Sufism began to make rapid strides. People began to doubt if Islam was the sole cause of the defeat and devastation of Iran by Arabia. It may have been one of those landslides, like the overthrow of the Romans by the Vandals, and the overthrow of the Greeks by the Goths, Visi-Goths, and Huns, which are the freaks of history. For their Islam could not save the Arabs when they had to encounter an enemy like the fierce Mongols. The year 1258 is a turning point in the history of Islam. In this year Halagu Khan, the great Mongol, sacked Baghdad and put an end to the Khalifate<sup>1</sup>. Arab supremacy fell to the ground never to rise again. Henceforward power passed on to the Turks and the Arabs retreated back to the desert. "Arabia sank back into its old isolation, and politically ceased to exist as a world power. The Arabs fell back into the same tribal system as in pre-Muslim days and the old predatory instincts prevailed, as one Moslem tribe raided another. Islamic unity in Arabia disappeared altogether, and beyond the change in faith and a marked fanaticism among the people, little was to be seen as the fruits of Islam. Illiteracy prevailed everywhere and the country stagnated for the next seven hundred years"<sup>2</sup>.

Halagu Khan was a Buddhist by religion. He had very

1. Browne—Literary History of Persia, vol. I, p. 274

2. Cash—Expansion of Islam, p. 74

scant regard for Islam<sup>1</sup> and turned the mosques of Persia into stables for his horses<sup>2</sup>.

Those people who had with great glee demolished the fire-temples of Iran and attributed their ability for wanton destruction to the preference of Allah for the religion of Islam, had to hide their face in shame.

The Mongols had adopted Buddhism long ago<sup>3</sup>. Kublai Khan, the brother of Halagu Khan ruled over Tibet<sup>4</sup>. At his instance all the current Buddhist texts were translated into Tibetan from Sanskrit<sup>5</sup>. It was Halagu's great-grandson Gazan Khan who was the first Mongol emperor to adopt Islam<sup>6</sup>. Thenceforth the Mongols became changed into Moghals. Chapter VII of Browne's Literary History of Persia, Vol II, gives a detailed account of the massacre, outrage, spoilation and destruction wrought on the Muslims, which Ibnul Athir describes as the 'death blow' on Islam, and as "the greatest catastrophe and the most dire calamity" of history. The depredation of the Mongols and the Tartars evidenced that military prowess does not indicate the intrinsic worth of a religion.

Islam did not serve very much to improve the moral character of the Arabs. It has even been alleged that "the Koran has no term for conscience"<sup>7</sup>. The four immediate successors of Hazrat Muhammad are known as Khalifa i Rashedin (truest guides). They have the highest place of honour in Islam. Two of them, Abu Bakr and Omar, were the fathers-in-law of Muhammad, and the other two, Osman

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1. Sykes—Persia, p. 62

2. Browne—Literary History of Persia, vol II, p. 12

3. Ross—Islam, p. 53

4. Browne—Literary History of Persia, vol II, p. 452

5. Farquhar—Outlines of Religious Literature, p. 277

6. Levy—Persian Literature, p. 53

7. Zwemer—The Muslim Doctrine of God p. 57



and Ali, were his sons-in-law. Yet Omar, Osman and Ali were assassinated by persons who professed to be Musalmans. Yazid, the sixth Khalifa sacked the tomb of Hazrat Muhammad in Medina<sup>1</sup>. That shows that Islam did not cure the Arabs of their savage manners. The sack of Baghdad by Halagu Khan demonstrated that Islam did not operate to make the Arabs invincible. Thus Islam lost much of its original glamour and people turned to Sufism in large numbers.

All honour is due to Jalaluddin Rumi, the prince of the Sufis, who explains the fundamental principles of the Gatha in modern Persian and thus makes the Cisti available to all and sundry. His outstanding merit compels admiration, and Browne observes "that the Masnavi deserves to rank among the great poems of all time". Jalal and Hafiz are the two foremost poets of Iran—nay, they are among the greatest poets of the world. And to our good fortune both of them are *par excellence* the exponents of the truth of Sufism. Of these two, Jalal is more philosophical and Hafiz is more romantic.

Jalal deals exhaustively with all the fundamental problems of the Cisti—Impersonal God, Personal God, the relation between the two, relation between man and God, the object and the process of creation, immortality of the Soul, and the alchemy of Love. This has earned for him the dignity of the apostle—the apostle of Sufism.

Jalal declares Sufism as the Elixir of Khizr :

आवे खीज़ अज़ जुए लुत्फे औलिया ।

मी खुरीम, अय तीरनेए घाफेल बे आ ॥ Masnavi 3-4303

The original founder of the Cisti cult is the idol of Jalal's heart, and now and again Jalal pours out his unstinted homage to the premier prophet of mystic philosophy. He does not,

1. Browne—Literary History of Persia, vol I, p. 226

however, mention the prophet of Iranian mysticism by his own name—'for fear of the fanatics' as he says ( Masnavi, 3-2117 ). Jalal gives to the premier prophet, the fanciful designation of "Hasamuddin" ( Masnavi, 4-1 ) and "Zia-ul Haq." ( Masnavi, 3-2120 ) Jalal however is quite sure that his homage knows its own destination ( Masnavi, 3-2122 ). If we care to learn the religion of Zarathustra from his own words in the Gatha, we also shall have no doubt as to the destination of Jalal's spontaneous reverence. He was not, on any account, a semitic prophet, for in that case there would not have been any reason to hide his name 'for fear of the fanatics'.

Hafiz said that if any one would remove his cloak, he would find the Junnar hidden under it.

हाफिज़ इन खिर्का के दारी तु बेबीनी फरदा ।

के चे ज़न्नार ज़ जीरश ब जफा बेकुशायद ॥

We fancy the same Junnar may be found on the waist of Jalal too, (only it is half-hidden by the pun on the word बेबुरीम):

वा नुमा सरी ज़ असरारत ब मा ।

ता बेबुरीम अज मयान जुन्नार हा ॥

[ "Teach us the secret of all secrets, so that we may bear on our waist, the Junnar (the badge of the Iranian creed)". ]

The fanatic mollah cannot tolerate the idea of Jalal putting on the Junnar, and so instead of reading the word as *burdan* (to bear) he reads it as *buridan* (to cut). He assumes gratuitously that the solitary saint of the desert, whose spiritual powers had drawn the crowd to him, was a Muslim Faquir and not a Zarathustrian Darvesh. Omar Khaiyam, however, boldly declares his admiration for the Junnar जुन्नार-ए मघानाह बर मियान खाहम् वस्तु—Ruba 456. [ I wish to wear on my waist the Junnar of the Maghas ]

And Amir Khusru the greatest of the poets of India, who wrote in the Persian language, says that he does not

wear the Junnar, simply because his veins have all turned into the strings of the Junnar.

आशिके यारम मुसलमानी मरा दरकार नीस्त ।

हर रगे मन तार गश्ते हाजते जुन्नार नीस्त ॥

[ I am a lover of the Darling. I have no need of Musalmanism. Every sinew of mine has turned into a string, and so I do not require the Junnar. ]

The Junnar of Jalal, however, is half-hidden. For unlike Hafiz he chooses to be a bit careful, remembering the well-known Sufi caution

वा खुदा दीवाना बाश ओ वा मुहम्मद हुशयार,

[ Be insane with God, but sober with Muhammad. ]

Emphasis on the supremacy of Sufism should not be misunderstood as an attempt to belittle the importance of the Koran or the dignity of Hazrat Muhammad. Millions and millions of people hold the Koran to be dearer than life. This could not have been so, unless this scripture had superior worth. As a matter of fact, the Koran upholds prominently and unambiguously the basic principles of Gathic religion, viz monotheism, aniconism and equality of men, and does not allow these cardinal principles ever to go out of sight. Above all, it repeatedly asserts the fact of the existence of Allah. My own preceptor, Sri Premananda Tirtha Swami Maharaj used to say: "belief in the existence of God is the whole truth of religion. He alone is a real Guru who can generate in the disciple, the belief in the existence of God. As soon as a man develops genuine conviction about the existence of God, his success in religious life is assured. If a man sincerely believes that the eyes of omniscient God are fixed on him, he can commit no sin. He is then on the way to sure God-realisation and will reach His presence soon". In this view of the matter, the utility of the Koran is unquestionable. It

iterates and reiterates the existence of Allah as often as it can, and thereby puts a man on the right track to God-realisation. The Koran is an excellent book for teaching the primary lessons of religion. It was not intended, as the Sufis hold, to teach the higher truths of religion. It teaches the exoteric and not the esoteric truths of religion for which one must look to other quarters. The fault lies in those who confine themselves to the Koran alone, and neglect the original gospel of Sufism in their spite against the Iranian culture.

Jalal is eloquent about the greatness of Hazrat Muhammad. Firstly, this was a necessity with him ; for he took upon himself the task of preaching Cisti to a people who had become Islamicised, and they would understand him better if he spoke in the language of the Koran. Secondly, Hazrat Muhammad carried out enthusiastically the work of preaching *Dina*. (mark that it is the same word of the Gatha, that the Koran uses) to less civilized people. This is a task that Maha Ratu Zarathustra greatly desired (Sukta 46-12) and yet his followers sadly neglected. Unless a race is educated in *Dina*, (exoteric Mazda Yasna) it does not become eligible for Cisti (esoteric Mazda Yasna). Thus the preliminary requirement for the propagation of the Cisti is the propagation of the *Dina*. In this matter Hazrat Muhamman had rendered and may yet render, yeoman's service for the propagation of the religion of the Gatha. The Bedouin had been very irreligious. He did not mind cheating Allah even. "The Bedouin had not much respect for his idols. He was quite ready to cheat them by sacrificing a gazelle when he had promised them a sheep"<sup>1</sup>. Hazrat Muhammad made them fairly religious and may make religious other people too. The impasse sets in when the Koran is taken to be a closed book—a complete book for all the truths of religion.

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1. Andre Servier—*Islam and the Psychology of the Musalman*, p. 27

Hazrat Muhammad had intended the Koran to be a preparatory course, a primary manual that prepares one for the higher truth of Sufism. But if anyone stops short with the Koran, and does not proceed up to Sufism he is bound to remain parochial and fanatic. This is how Aurangzebs proceed to behead Dara Shikohs and Sarmads.

It is to warn the people against such defection that Jalal frequently tells us that the Koran often misleads :

दर नबी फर्मुद कीन कुरान .ज. देल

हादीए बाज़ी ओ बाज़ी रा मोज़ेल—Masnavi, 6-656.

[ God hath said in the Koran, "This Koran with all its heart leads some aright and others astray. ]

What Jalal teaches in Persian, Kabir preached in Hindi, and by the grace of these two outstanding apostles of Sufism, India and Iran may again be united, as they had been united in the Vedic days.

The history of the Kabir Pantha has been exhaustively dealt with by Dr. Govinda Trigunayata in his book कबीरकी विचारधारा. Yet a few words might here be added about the cause of Kabir's difference with Sheikh Taki, his preceptor in Sufism. The two main branches of the Sufis are the Kaderiyas and the Naqshbandis. (Some scholars add two other names, viz. the Cisti and the Suhrawardis. But the 'Cisti' is the common name, both for the Kaderiyas and the Naqshbandis, while there is little difference between the Suhrawardis and the Kaderiyas). Largely speaking, the Kaderiyas may be said to represent the Iranian school of Sufism, and the Naqshbandis the Indian school.

Al Beruni, the great Iranian savant, had been attached to the court of Sultan Mamud. He was vastly learned in Sanskrit and translated in Arabic the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali<sup>1</sup>. Even from that time the attention of the Sufi

1. Weber—History of Indian Literature, p. 239



doctors had been drawn to Yogic procedures like *Pranayama* (breath control) *Ajaṭa Japa* (automatic recollection in each breath) and awakeing of the *Kundalini* force (release of spiritual energy coiled up like a serpent). [ Modern Psychology explains how the conscious is modified and controlled by the sub-conscious. The Yoga system teaches how we can modify the sub-conscious by the conscious<sup>1</sup> ] Some of them included these items in their spiritual discipline<sup>2</sup>. About 1370 A. D., a hundred years after the publication of the *Masnavi*, Bahauddin, a Sufi doctor of Khorasan organised these Sufis into a separate sect which bore the name of Naqshbandi<sup>3</sup>.

Kabir learnt the principles of Sufism from Sheikh Taki, but he<sup>1</sup> was fond of the Naqshbandi and rose to be the head of Naqshbandis of India. Kabir assimilated so many of the practices of Hindu sadhana, that many people consider him to be a disciple of Ramananda, the great Vaishnava preceptor of Benaras. But this is a popular mistake. For though Kabir cherished great respect for Ramananda, he did not budge an inch from Sufi principles in such matters as monotheism, aniconism and caste-equality. Ramananda on his part was an orthodox Hindu and a staunch believer in Hindu ideals. Kabir's opposition to idolatry was so strong that he took up the Salagram Sila, of his Hindu disciple Dharmadas and threw it into the Jamuna<sup>4</sup>.

This does not agree with his being a disciple of Ramananda. Moreover Kabir distinctly states that he went to Manikpur and resided there for learning the principles of Sufism from Sheikh Taki.

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1. N. K. Bradma—Philosophy of Hindu Sadhana, p. 130

2. Iqbal—Development of Persian Metaphysics, p. 110

3. John Subhan—Sufism, Its Saints and Shrines, p. 187.

4. Shyam Sundar Das—कबीर ग्रन्थावली ( प्रस्तावना ) p 28

माणिकपुरहि कबीर बसेरा ।

मदहति शुनि शेख तकीकेरा ॥ Vijak—Ramaini 48-1

Sheikh Taki wished to keep Sufism confined within the limits of the Masnavi and disliked the idea of its expansion by assimilating Hindu practices. So the preceptor and the disciple fell out. Kabir did not like the narrowness of Sheikh Taki and remarked

नाना नाच नचायके नाचहि नटके भेख ।

घट घट हय अविनाशी शुनहु तकी तुम शेख ॥

Vijak—Ramaini 68

[ The same actor assumes different roles (The Lord fulfils himself in many men, in as many ways). Hear, O Sheikh Taki the Eternal Lord lives in all. ] (There is no reason for condemning the Indian school of Sufism).

The remark appeared to be sarcastic as it was addressed to the guru by his name. Sheikh Taki became much annoyed. Emperor Sikandar Lodi was one of the disciples of Sheikh Taki. Taki went up to Sikandar and complained that Kabir had become a renegade. Sikandar Lodi bound Kabir in chains and threw him into the Ganga. The fact is related by Kabir himself and is collected in the Adi Grantha of the Sikhs (Rag Bhairava. 19-1). The chains somehow slackened and Kabir survived the persecution of Sikandar Lodi and the Kabir pantha still flourishes. This again shows that an idea cannot be killed by the sword.

The Indian school of Sufism consolidated by Kabir, has an importance quite its own. It may teach the Parsis of India the method of adjusting Mazda-Yasna to the conditions of modern life, by emphasising the essential principles and liberalising the non-essential practices. (For all we know, the Rama of Kabir may have been Parsu-Rama or the Rama of Persia,

for Kabir's ideology is very much different from that of the Indian Rama). The Kabir pantha may also teach the Musalmans how to live in amity with the Hindus.

For Kabir had nothing but love for the Hindus and the Hindus also have nothing but love for Kabir. Thus my preceptor always used to say that Kabir holds the key to the solution of the Hindu-Muslim tangle.

Kabir may be said to be the precursor of Islamic reformation movements like Ahmadianism in India and Bahaism in Iran, which ask the Musalmans to live in harmony with the Hindus and Parsis. Sensible Musalmans accepted the principles of Kabir. Akbar had issued orders prohibiting the slaughter of cows within his territories<sup>1</sup>. Dara Shikoh took to the Upanishads and had the word *सत्य* (in Devanagari script) engraved on his ring<sup>2</sup>. Emperor Mohammad Shah (1719—1748) had been initiated into the Shiva-Narayani sect<sup>3</sup>.

Kabir may also be considered as the fore-runner of the Hindu reformation movements like the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj. For the object that Raja Ram Mohan Ray<sup>4</sup> or Maharshi Dayananda Saraswati<sup>5</sup> aimed at, was to take up like Kabir, the principles of the Iranian Veda as much as possible within the frame-work of Hinduism.

In view of the fact that both the Arya Samaj and the Sikh Pantha are largely influenced by the ideal of Kabir, there should not be any quarrel between the two. There is a bitterness, because the Arya-Samajist detests the fact that the Sikh, is very much tolerant of a foreign religion-like Islam. The Arya Samajist fails to see that like the Sufis of Iran,

1. Badauni—Memoirs, vol II, p. 321

2. Jadunath Sarkar—History of Aurangzeb vol I, p. 298

3. Farquhar—Outlines of Religious Literature, p. 345

4. Farquhar—Modern Religious Movements p. 30

5. Griswold—Religion of the Rigveda p. 369

Mahamuni Nanak saw in Islam only an imitation of the *Dina* portion of the Mazda-Yasna which he expressly stated

कलिमहि वेदु अथर्वनु हुया ।

नाउ खुदाई अल्लहु भइया ॥

Asa-Var 13-1

[ Islam only uses the (Arabic) name Allah, in place of the (Iranian) Khuda. Otherwise it is not much different from the religion of the Atharva Veda (i. e. Bhargava Veda or Avesta) which is the proper Veda for the Kali age. ]

There is no doubt that Mahamuni Nanak takes the more reasonable view, and that the Arya Samajist should not emphasise the difference with the Sikh, but should aim at unity with him, on the basis of the Gospel of the Gatha, which both of them follow, as revived by Kabir.

It has sometimes been said that Mahamuni Nanak owes his inspiration to Islam. Raja Gopal Acariyar went so far as to say that 'the Sikhs are uncircumcised Musalmans—not given to cow-killing'<sup>1</sup>. The words of Nanak however suggest that of all books, it is the Atharva Veda that is the source of his inspiration. He even asserts that Islam does not teach any new truth. It simply substitutes the Iranian name *Khuda* by the Arabic name *Allah*<sup>2</sup>.

Nanak says that the Veda is the source of Bhakti Yoga, and that by following the doctrines of Veda, one can obtain the vision of God.

वेद पुकारै भगति सरोति ।

सुनि सुनि मानै वेखै ज्योति ॥

Rag Vilabalu—Astapadiya 1-6

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1. Rajagopal Achariar—Vaisnava Reformers of India, p. 18
  2. Allah is the masculine form of the tribal goddess Ollat (Nicholson—History of Arabic Literature.)

And he pays his homage to Sri Krishna, as the embodiment of all the Devas

एक कृष्यान्त सर्व देवा ।      Slok-Sahaskriti-4

Nanak thus leaves no doubt about the inclinations of his heart.

All the same, Nanak did not ignore Islam. He entered into one of the principal mosques of Baghdad, the then capital of the Muslim world, and shouted at the top of his voice the most sacred formula of Islam *La Ilahi ill Allah*. He however refused to complete it, by shouting *Muhammad Rasul Allah*. He remained calm and composed, and yet firm in his resolution, amidst the insistence of the large threatening crowd that had been attracted there by the strange conduct of the Hindu darvesh<sup>1</sup>. Nanak was prepared to accept the universal truths preached by Islam, but not the particular truths preached by the sectarians.

Kabir and Nanak were inspired by the same ideal. There is however an important difference. In Kabir pantha, the Hindus and the Musalmans joined together in the same prayer and uttered the same mantras but when the function was over, the Hindu went back to his temple and the Musalman to his mosque. There was no fusion between the two communities. Mahamuni Nanak removed this distinction. When anybody entered into Nanak Pantha, he ceased to be a Hindu or a Musalman. He became a Sikh. The Sikh Panth was an independent unit without being tied to Hindu or Musalman ways. Thus Guru Nanak went one step further than Kabir in consolidating the Indian school of Sufism. Mahamuni

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I. Kartar Singh—Life of Guru Nanak Deb, p. 171

It is interesting to note that the Wahabis are reported to have discarded *Muhammad Rasul Allah* from the Kalima, on the ground that the utterance of the name of a human being, however great, in the same breath along with Allah, is derogatory to the glory of Allah.



Nanak adopted all the basic principles of Mazda Yasna—monotheism, aniconism and caste-equality. Yet he showed the way of a harmony with Hinduism by agreeing to the Mother-cult (Japji 30-1, vide also Asa-var, 13-2). The idea was fully developed by Guru Govinda Singha, who made a synthesis of Hinduism and Zarathustrianism on the basis of the Sakti cult.

The religion of the Veda evolved three distinct types of character—the Vaishnava, the Saiva, and the Sakta<sup>1</sup>. If one gives up parochial outlook and recognizes the Veda to be the Indo-Iranian Scripture, rather than mere Indian, he would find in the Parsi, the purest form of the Saiva cult, and in the Sikh the purest form of the Sakta cult. In their Hinduised version, there is the attempt to introduce icon and caste. The original distinction rested on the comparatively greater emphasis laid on love, justice and power respectively. The God of Love (Vishnu), the God of Justice (Siva—Mazda), and the God of Power (Kali—Akala) are one-in-three and three-in-one. If the Hindu, the Parsi and the Sikh integrate into one body—not by giving up their individual features, but by bearing in mind that each of them is complementary to the other two—the religion of the Veda would shine in full bloom. Maharsi Dayananda Saraswati had attempted the task. He adopted the principles of the Parsi religion, *in toto*. Adoption of the Parsi Scripture (the Gatha) would have been the happy natural consummation.

The task of assimilating the Iranian dogmas started with Kabir and Nanak. Dayananda developed it by showing that these dogmas were consistent with the four orthodox Vedas.

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1. The Saura sect is a branch of the Vaisnava, and the Ganapatya sect, a branch of the Saiva cult. Properly speaking the Saura represented the Jaina (the worshipper of the resplendent soul) and the Ganapatya represented the Buddhist, (the upholder of the democracy of the masses).

The consummation lies in recognising the Upastha as the fifth Veda.

If we analyse closely and look to the root principles, Caitanya is the true representative of the Hindu ideal, and Kabir is the best representative of the Parsi ideal, while Rama Krishna represents a synthesis of the two. (To Rama Krishna, iconic Vivekananda and aniconic Kesav Candra were equally dear). Broadly speaking, they represent the Vaisnava cult, the Saiva cult, and the Sakta cult respectively. There is no impropriety in taking Kabir to be representative of the Saiva cult. The themes of non-idolatry and caste equality that he rigorously pursued, proclaim his greater loyalty to aniconic Parsu-Rama (the worshipper of Siva) than to iconic Raghu—Rama (the worshipper of Visnu). Moreover Kabir passed all his life at Benaras, which is the biggest centre of Siva worship. Some people say that Kabir was born in a Brahmin family and that Niru, the weaver was merely his foster father. Others contest the story. It is however true that Kabir had predilection for Brahmanic culture. He says that in the previous birth, he was a Brahmin but as he had neglected the worship of Rama, he was born a julha (weaver).

पूरव जनम हम बाह्यन होते

बोवै करम तपहीना ।

राम देवकी सेवा चूका

पकड़ि जुलहा कीना<sup>1</sup> ॥

Kabir was reared in the family of a Musalman, largely influenced by Iranian Sufism which is the revival of Mazada Yasna, and Mazda Yasna is the earliest enunciation of the Siva cult which was imported into India, in spite of the

1. Shyam Sundar Das—Kabir Granthavali, p. 173

opposition of sage Daksa. Thus Kabir is a fit representative of the Siva cult.

It may also be remembered that Sufimani Kabir was immensely influenced by Saint Goraksanath, the staunchest champion of the Saiva cult, since the birth of modern Hinduism (i. e. Hinduism, as is presented in vernacular literature). The picture of "the Avadhuta", as depicted by Goraksanath and Kabir exactly agree, and Kabir often puts to use the language and the idiom of Goraksanath. Then again it is very likely that it was in imitation of the ways of Gorakh panth, that Kabir prescribed the Seli, (woollen cord worn round the neck), as badge of his sect.<sup>1</sup> The Seli reminds us of the Suf (woollen Kusti) of the Parsi, and we may feel the presence of the democratic God Siva, in all the four creeds, in Mazda Yasna and Sufism and in Gorakhpanth and Kabir panth. The vedic sages did not lose sight of the affinity between Mazda and Siva. The Gatha calls Mazda शिवेष्ठ (the best Siva) ये सेविष्ठो अहुरो (Yasna 33-11), while the Angirasa Veda (4-8-2) states that "Mahat" (Mazat = Mazda) is the name of that valiant Asura (Siva)

महद् तद् वृष्णः असुरस्य नामा

Kabir founded the Indian school of Sufism (Kabir panth—a modification of the Naksbandi school) and by his liberal use of Indian terminology, liberated Sufism from its Arabic cloak and thus paved the way for its recognition as an Aryan cult. Nanak completed the task by welcoming Sufism as the message of the Veda.

The Sakta cult had been promulgated in order to unite the Saiva and the Vaisnava. Both Rama Krishna and Nanak perceived the worth of the Sakta cult as the bond of union

1. Govinda Trigunayata—कबीरकी विचारधारा, chapter 2

between two divergent views. Rama Krisna was a staunch devotee of Kalika, and Nanak too paid homage to Mother Goddess (Japji 30-1). But while Ram Krisna paid more attention to individual life, Nanak paid more attention to national life.

Nationalism is the path-way to internationalism (i.e. brotherhood of man). The great French philosopher Comte was so enamoured of the Unity of Mankind, that he would gladly substitute the worship of Humanity, for the worship of God. It would thus appear that Mahamuni Nanak pursued a worthier object, at least one, that was the necessity of the time for saving the Aryan culture. He brought with him a book that created a nation—a book that attempted the synthesis of Hindu and Parsi religions. All honour is due to Mahamuni Nanak, who came up with the superior vision and the supreme determination of the apostle to save the Aryan culture from annihilation. Eight hundred years had passed by since the battle of Nahavand, when the last Iranian emperor Yazdigird was overpowered by the Arabic hordes. Owing to the repression of some fanatic people, Zoroastrianism was almost wiped out of Iran, and Hinduism also faced the same peril in India. A tragic chapter of human history was being enacted. For the extinction of the Veda, Vedanta, Gatha and Gita, would have been irretrievable loss to mankind. At this time Mahamuni Nanak appeared on the scene. He found in Hindu-Parsi unity the only way of escape. He adopted *in toto* in public life, all the healthy institutions, such as monotheism, aniconism, and caste-equality, that Maha-Ratu Zarathustra had preached, yet permitted scope for the Hindu customs in the private life of the individual. This is the implication of his apparently two contrary statements :

कलिमहि वेदु अथर्वनु हुआ

Asa-Var-13-2

[ The Atharva Veda (the Veda of Atharvan Zarathustra) is the proper Veda of the modern age ]

and

चारे वेद हुऐ सचीआर ।

Asa-Var-13-2

[ All the four Vedas are true. ]

The Bhargava Veda stoutly denounces polytheism, iconolatry and caste-distinction, while the other Vedas seem to lend suport to them. Thus there is some contradiction in declaring both of them to be true. Compromise with Hinduism has been considered by some scholars to be a sign of weakness on the part of Satguru Nanak (Macnicol—Indian Theism, p. 144, and Farquhar—Religious Literature of India, p. 337) But it is really the mark of his superior wisdom. For 'unity in variety' is the higher truth. That one has become many, is the conclusion both of Eastern as well as Western philosophy. Angirasa Veda recognises the worth of the many as well, i. e. it does not ignore variety. Bhargava Veda lays more stress on Unity, and ignores the value of the Many. Angirasa Veda is the National Scripture of India, and Bhagarva Veda is the National Scripture of Iran, The two together make the whole truth and none of them may be neglected . A monotonous uniformity is insipid.

The same cap may not be prescribed for all the heads. The beauty of the rainbow is due to the presence of the seven colours. It would cease to be a rainbow, if the other colours were wiped out and only the red left over. The Angirasa Veda sustains the ideal of unity in variety, and has room for variety. This ideal may not be discarded off-hand, as altogether irrational. Thus as the consummation of the ideal of Hindu-Parsi unity, enunciated ages ago, by Mahamaharsi Atri, Satguru Nanak allowed a scope to Angirasa Veda as well. This is the reason of his saying चारे वेद हुऐ सचिआर





As a matter of fact the Angirasa and the Bhargava Veda are supplementary to each other. They are inseparable from each other like the concave and the convex sides of the same curve. They differed greatly from each other, but differed in such a way as to supplement one another ; each eager to be friendly with the other, and yet each unable to yield to the others. "These two Asiatic branches of the Aryan tree are so closely connected in their beginnings, the *sap* coursing through both being so evidently the *same life blood* that a study of the one, necessarily involves a parallel study of the other".<sup>1</sup> "Two nations derived from the same stock, and exhibiting such striking affinities, such undeniable resemblances, as to betray their original identity at every turn, and make us feel, as though we can actually grasp and hold fast the time when they were as yet undivided."<sup>2</sup>

Regarding the central purpose of religion, viz. God-realisation, both the scriptures are equally useful, so that in the private life of the individual, the one is not more important than the other. In public life, however, Bhargava Veda has the greater importance, as it helps to build up and sustain national solidarity. Yet the two together make a complete whole.

चु निगाह नुर-ए दो चश्म-अम ओ एक अम

Iqbal—Israr-i-Khudi

[ The eyes are two, but the vision is one ]

We should be equally mindful of both of them. If one eye is injured, the other also will be affected.

It is the height of impudence to hold that the Upanisads and the Gita offer no truth, and that Sankara and Ramanuja were deluded fools. It is a crime to seek to obliterate these

1. Ragozin—Story of Media, Babylon and Persia, p. 36

2. Ragozin—Vedic India, p. 4

great scriptures. That may be a virtue for the fanatic, but Mahamuni Nanak knew better than that. He left room for Hindu customs as well. All the same he was convinced that the Hindu customs, which make for diversity, and may therefore lead to disunity, should have no place in the national life. This prevented the whole nation standing up as one man against the attack of the enemy, as had been instructed by Maha Ratu Zarathustra (Yasna 31-16). A disorganised crowd is not able to stand the aggression of an organised nation. Thus Mahamuni Nanak decided that in the social, political and national life, the Parsi customs of monotheism, aniconism and caste-equality, should alone prevail. In his private life, one may observe the Hindu customs, if he so chooses, but he should never try to enforce them on the national pulpit. In this matter Mahamuni Nanak followed the lead of Agama. The Mahanirvana Tantra says

प्रवृत्ते भैरव चक्रे सर्वे वर्णा द्विजोत्तमाः ।

निवृत्ते भैरव चक्रे सर्वे वर्णाः पृथक् पृथक् ॥

Mahanirvan Tantra 8-179

[ In congregational prayer, i. e. in public life, every body is as good as a Brahmin. In his private life, one may observe the caste-rules. ]

The principle may be extended to image-worship as well. There is no room for the icon in national functions, though an individual's inclination may be tolerated in his private worship. Such concession to Hindu sentiments is permissible for the sake of national solidarity. It is better that such compromise should be made, than that the two wings should fight with each other on these debatable points and fall a prey to the common enemy who would be glad to liquidate both of them. After all, it is the Angirasa branch which has preserved all that is glorious and valuable in the Aryan

literature—Veda, the Upanisada, Mahabharata, Dhammapada, Mula Sutra, and Panini. This branch does not deserve to be erased out altogether.

The formula of Mahamuni Nanak worked exceedingly well. Punjab was soon freed from the tyranny of the fanatics, and the Hindus and the Parsis were again free to follow their own religion—the religion of their forefathers. It is worthy of note that when the British conquered Punjab, they snatched it from a Sikh and not from a Muslim ruler.

Hinduism and Parsi-ism are the two most ancient and the two most philosophical religions of the world, and every lover of humanity should greet Mahamuni Nanak for propounding a formula that saved them from extinction. The saner section of the Musalmans also took this view. Thus it is that Mian Mirji proceeded to lay the foundation stone of the Golden Temple at Amritsar, for he was convinced that the Sikh Panth was a protest against tyranny, and not against Islam.

Kabirpantha repeats the monotheistic (3-2), aniconic (3-19), and the casteless (6-21), system of the Swetaswatara Upanisad (and the Gatha), and is thus an ideal religion. Kabir however is aware that the Nanak Pantha is better suited for establishing the Brotherhood of Man. For, while Kabir pantha maintains the purity of the Bhargava ideal, Nanak pantha attempts a synthesis of the two ideals, Bhargava and Angirasa (Parsi and Hindu), and thus happens to be more comprehensive.

कवीर, हरदी पीयरी चूणा उजल भाइ ।

राम सनेही यूँ मिले दुनों वरण गवाइ ॥

Shyam Sundar Das—कवीर ग्रन्थावली, p. 54

[ Turmeric is yellow, and lime is white. When the two are united in the love of God, each has to surrender its hue to a certain extent. ]

This is how Mian Mirji feels such admiration for the Nanak Pantha, and accepts the invitation to lay the foundation stone of its central temple.

Vanity and piety ill assort.

घुलघुल ओ ताक ओ तुरुम्ब ओ गीर ओ दार ।

के नमीबीनम मरा माज़र दार ॥

Masnavi—6-2509

[ All his hustle and bustle, hurry and flurry, is only a tacit admission that the fanatic does not know what he is about. ]

Those who wish to establish Unity of Mankind by the flourish of the sword, are running after will-o'-the wisp. They do not know which way Unity of Mankind lies.

Mian Mirji sets the example how Sufism may help to establish the Brotherhood of Man.

The Hindu and the Parsi may again live together in close social intercourse, as they did in the days of the Mahabharata war, for we then find Salya, the King of Media, to be the maternal uncle of Nakula and Sahadeva. They may join together again in common congregational prayer in spite of their having different scriptures. This used to be the custom at the time of the Mahabharata.

भृगुभिश् चाङ्गिरोभिश् च, हुतम् मन्त्रैः पृथग्-विधैः ।

Mahabharata-Vanaparva—223-24

[ The Bhrigus and the Angirasas offered worship before the same Fire, though they used their separate mantras. ]

The religious month was apportioned between them, the dark fortnight being allotted to Pitri-Yana ( i. e. for greater pursuit of Parsi scriptures ) and the bright fortnight being allotted to Deva Yana ( i. e. for greater pursuit of the Hindu scriptures )

अमावास्यां हि पितरः पौर्णमास्याम् हि देवताः ।

मन्मुखेनैव हूयन्ते भुञ्जते च हुतं हविः ॥

Mahabharata-Adiparva—7-11

They may now avail of the additional facility of the Sikh Gurudwara, which provides the platform for the joint prayer. The Gurudwara, on account of the better organisation of the Sikh Sangat, also brings with it a sense of security.

Religion is said to be "the presentation ( in its own form) of the substance of philosophical truth"<sup>1</sup> and a religion which is based on sound philosophy cannot die. That is how the essence of the religion of the Gatha emerged as Sufism.

Sufism proclaimed the equality of religions as its first principle.

इन सेफाल ओ इन पलीतेह् दीगर अस्त ।

लैक नुरश नीस्त दीगर, ज्ञान सर अस्त ॥

Masnavi—3-1255

[ The pot and the wick are different but the flame is same in all the lamps.]

तु खानकाह् ओ खराबात दर मयानह् मबीन ।

खोदा गवास्त के हर जा के हस्त बा उ इम ॥

Hafiz

[ Do not make any difference between the shrine and the temple. Khoda will bear testimony, that wherever He happens to go, I accompany Him. ]

This is the proper way to establish the Brotherhood of Man. It will not be established by liquidating Hinduism and Parsi-ism, or Buddhism, and Jinism.

Hinduism and Parsi-ism are the two legs on which alone Brotherhood of Man may take a stable stand. For these are

1. Pringle Pattison—The Idea of God, p. 38



the two religions, which are complete with all the four Yogas {Karma, Dhyana, Jnana and Bhakti}. The other religions that there are, develop only some one of the Yogas. These two magnificent religions are united, in being the two offshoots of the same vedic root, yet they are different, holding, as they do, divergent views on such matters as monotheism, iconism, and caste-equality. They are complementary to each other. In between them, they cover all the varieties of religion, i. e. all the current religions.

Nanak completed the task of synthesising Hinduism and Parsi-ism, which had been commenced by Maha-maharsi Atri. He thus claims for himself the distinction of सकल जमाती (Japji 28-2) i. e. a member of all the communities. It is not unlikely that the great formula of Indo-Iranian synthesis was uttered by Atri on the banks of the Tigris, at Bagdad of the Iran of the Vedic age. Bag-dad means the city of God (literally, the gift of God). Bhaga (another name of Rudra) was adored by the Indians and the Iranians alike. (Haug—Essays on the Parsis, p. 237). It has come down to us as Bhaga-wan, just as Khoda comes down as Khodavand.

The outlook of Nanak was not exclusive ; it did not exclude any body. The Muslims were free to join this confederacy. They had already adopted the principles of the Gatha by admitting the Sufi cult to be the essence of Islam. It was up to them now to acknowledge the supremacy of Khizir, the great Prophet of Sufism, whom the Koran itself suggests to be the preceptor of Moses (Koran 18-64). To Zarathustra (the Khizir of the Sufi saints), we may trace the real beginning of the Brotherhood of Man. Of course he does not countenance what has been called "telescopic philanthropy" i. e. the citizenship of the world all at once, without being a citizen of Iran (vide Yas 50-3). He invited every one, even the Turanians to the membership of the Magha (Zarathustrian Church)—Yasna 46-12. But his view was not confined to the

nation alone. He laid the foundation of what may be called "The Servants of the World Society" गडेश् वास्त्रा (Yasna 33-4). He was out to serve the whole world (Yas 28-1, Yas 33-3), he had love for all mankind (Yas 46-13). "To Internationalism through Nationalism," was his sound method. And what can be more elegant and more exalted, than the great Symposium of Religions—the earliest in the world, that he had set up, where in he invited all the learned Doctors to explain their tenets, and promised respectful attention, to each of these.

येद्या मोइ अषात् हचा, वहिस्तेम् येस्ने पइती ।

वएदा मज़दाओ अहुरो, योइ आओऽहरे-चा हेन्ति-चा ॥

तान् यजाइ खाइश् नामेनिश्, पइरि-चा जसाइ वन्ता ॥

Yas 51-22

[“Come ye all, all righteous people, come fullest, to this great ceremony of mine. Ahura Mazda, I would understand all (the doctrines), that there were and all that there are. I would render the honour, that is *due to each denomination*, and serve them all as a friend.]

The organisers of the “Parliament of Religion” at Chicago (1893), could not have devised a loftier motto.

Herein is the true foundation of the Brotherhood of Man.

The green clad Khizir would gain precedence in the heart of the Iranian.

युसुफे गुम गदतेह् बाज् आयद व कन्नआन घम मखुर ।

Hafiz. (284)

[“Yusuf would come back to Canaan; do not lose heart.]

Yes, Sufism would soon develop into *Neo-Sufism*, wherein the Gatha would count as the highest Scripture and the

Masnavi would count as its commentary<sup>1</sup>. The Sufi would do well to subscribe to the authority of the Gatha. It is no good being satisfied with the echo, when one can hear the voice of the original songster. The Parsi would do well to accept the Masnavi as the supplement to the Gatha. Jalal is well-equipped to unite Frayana, the Turanian, and usher him into the Magha (Yas 46-12). He serves to remind us, that one cannot afford to be narrow-minded if he would enter into the "Order of the Servants of the World", organised by Maghavan (Lord of the Church) Zarathustra (Yas 33-4). This is how Neo-Sufism emerges.

The Hindus also would welcome this resurrection of the Gatha. A friend of the mine wished to designate Zarathustra as 'the Prophet of Iran'. I told him that it would be misleading. For Zarathustra had come for the regeneration of the whole of the world and not for the Iranians alone. The division into Indians and Iranians had not yet taken place. It cropped up after Atharvan Zarathustra had proclaimed his message. Some people, mostly Iranians, accepted his message. Some others, mostly Indians, did not. But times have changed, and Indians are now eager to accept the Gospel of Bhagavan Zarathustra. Stalwarts like Mahamuni Nanak, Raja Ram Mohan Ray, and Maharsi Dayananda Saraswati, competed with each other for importing all the healthy institutes of Maharatu Zarathustra, and thereby prepared the ground for the entry of the Holy Prophet in the arena, and we will soon hear the sermons of Bhagavan Zarathustra from the pulpits all over the country. That would be the happy consummation of the movement for reformation started by the Makers of the New India. Their work would be incomplete till this is done. As regards

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1. It is interesting to note that Hazrat Muhammed had predicted the possibility of the Iranians superseding the Arabs in the matter of religion [Koran Sura 47-40, and Salo's Koran, (translation), foot note at p. 402.] In Masnavi the prediction comes true.

the orthodox section, it can hardly ignore the Gatha. The Svetaswatara Upanisad, which is the earliest scripture of the Saiva sect, owes its inception to the inspiration of Atharvan Zarathustra. Thus, speaking objectively, the Gatha is the earliest scripture of the Saiva sect. It is only necessary to accord a formal sanction to it, by recognizing the *de facto* to be the *de jure*. There is nothing unusual in the matter. For democratic Siva is pre-eminently the God of the Asura worshippers (Iranians) as aristocratic Visnu is of the Deva worshippers (Indians). One cannot call oneself a follower of Siva, and yet ignore the Gatha. The Gatha, which is the cream of the Bhargava Veda, would soon make a place for itself in the heart of the orthodox Hindu<sup>1</sup>.

The Iranian can hardly afford to part company with Zarathustra. His heart pines for the ancestral heritage. Lo, the fascinating figure of Atharvan Zarathustra, already looms large on the horizon of Iran.

जरथुस्त, इरान खार अस्त, अय रवाने पाके जरथुस्त ।

इन किस्ती दर गरदाब अस्त, हैफ आव ओ खाके जरथुस्त ॥

Eshqi-Ristakhiz.

[ O Zarathust, Iran is in ruins ; O Zarathust, Holy Soul, The ship of Iran is in a whirlpool. Alas for the country, O Zarathust. ]

Let us hasten to bring him to solid ground—the Prince of Prophets on the throne of Raji ( तोइ नरेपीश् रजीश् Yasna 53-9).

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1. Considering the immense influence of Atharvan Zarathustra, on the formation of Indo-Iranian Nation, it is unfortunate that the Government of India does not set apart a day in honour of this Super-Prophet. The birth-day of Bhagavan Zarathustra deserves to be declared a public holiday ( along with those of Bhagavan Rama candra and Bhagavan Sri Krishna ). Would not the leaders of the nation press the point on the Government of India ?

खोदा दानिस्त कि मन आशिक-अम ओ हिच न गुफ्त ।

हाफेज़ अर निज़ विदानद के चूनिन अम चे शूद ॥ Hafiz

[ I adore Zarathustra secretly. What would be the harm if I adore him openly ? ]

[ Literally :- God knows that I am in love, and He does not chide me for that. What harm would there be, if Hafiz also becomes aware ( admits ) that he is in love ]

This innate instinct is imperishable in the Iranian. He cannot break away from Zarathustra—there is no reason why he should.

This does not, however, mean that he should refuse the help that Islam gives to him. Koran corroborates over and over again the fundamental dogmas of Mazda Yasna—its monotheism, aniconism and caste-equality. There is no sense in rejecting the truth of the Koran. The Nec-Sufi would give to the Koran, the honour that is due to it, as an essential scripture for the *Dina* portion of Mazda-Yasna. He should not however stop with the Koran. He should rise to Sufism which Hazrat Muhammad had taught to Hazrat Ali secretly. Otherwise his spiritual life would remain dwarfed and stunted. He should not stop with the Masnavi too, but go on to the earliest source, the sacred spring of the Elixir of Khizir (i.e. the Gatha). Its current has been flowing in Iran for the last six thousand years, and is as indispensable for the Iranian's spiritual growth as the mother's milk is for the child.

Nothing could be more tragic than that the Iranian should abjure the Gospel of Bhagavan Zarathustra, while other nations would profit by the exalted Practical Idealism of the magnificent Prophet, in whose message profound wisdom blends with simple discipline.



"The passionate fiery personality, the abstract mystical thinker, the strong and the practical reformer, 'the shepherd of the poor', so fierce in his championing of honest toilers, oppressed by cruel marauder, all this we can read for ourselves, in a self-revelation of unmistakable truth. It is the combination of metaphysics and common sense, which stamps the character with reality"<sup>1</sup> Iranians did not forget the Cisti of the Gatha even in the dark ages. They should now wake up to it in full vigour. Neo-Sufism is the destiny of Iran, with the Gatha as the first Scripture, and the Masnavi as its commentary. Recitation of the Gatha five times a day, would be the individual prayer, and performance of Yajna before Fire, would be the congregational and ceremonial prayer. The enchantment of the Gatha will overcome the pugnacity of the stolid orthodox dogmatic.

खन्देह-ए जाम-ए मय ओ जल्फ-ए गिरेह्गीर निगार ।

अय बसा तौवा के चुन तौवाह्-ए हाफेज वेशेकस्त ॥

[ The laugh of the wine-cup will break the resolution of many a Hafiz. ]

At the same time Masnavi brings out the implications of the Gatha, and serves as a preventive against the relapse into the Religion of the Yasta, which is another name for Deva Yasna. The Iranian cannot neglect the Masnavi, which revived the Cisti of the Gatha. Koran repeats the truth of the old scriptures. This is practically the argument that Jalal puts forth for the acceptance of the Koran.

नय कि हम तौरीयत ओ अन्जिल ओ जवुर ।

शुद गवाह सद्क ए कुरान अय शकुर ॥

Masnavi 3-2539

[ 'Is it not that the Koran teaches the same truth as was taught by the Old Testament, the New Testament and the Psalms ?' ]

Khawaja Kamaluddin, the Imam of the Woking mosque, London makes this clear when he says "Muhammad sang the *same* praises of Ahura, and reproduced the *same* wise sayings of Mazda in the shape of the Koran...Muhammad brought *again* the wisdom which had become lost after the departure of Zoroaster".<sup>1</sup>

The doctrines of Kabir and Nanak are very much similar. But while Nanak makes some concessions to the Hindu customs, Kabir does not. Kabir aimed at preserving the purity of the ideal of the Bhargava Veda ; Nanak aimed at a synthesis of the Bhargava and Angirasa ideals.

We thus find that Kabir and Nanak and Dayananda and Ram Mohan Ray too took up the sacred task of spreading the message of Bhagavan Zarathustra in India, as Jalal and Hafiz and the host of Sufi poets did in Iran.

But we would fail to derive the fullest benefit of the message of Jalal and Kabir if we forget that these are the two echoes of the same original voice of Maha Ratu Zarathustra. The Gatha is the original scripture of Sufism and Jalal and Kabir are its two great commentators. Cisti (Kisti) is the Vedic term for Sufism<sup>2</sup> and the Gatha is the highest scripture of the Cisti.

Looked at in this light, the Gatha would be as dear to the Hindus, as it is to the Parsis. And those Musalmans also who have learnt to appreciate Sufism, would be attracted to this noble Scripture. It would be a glorious day when all of us can enter into the spirit of the Gatha with the help of Jalal

1. Kamaluddin—Islam and Zoroastrianism p. 38

2. वि यद् वाचं कीस्तासो भरन्ते ( Rigveda 6-67-10 )

and Kabir. But the path is not so smooth—there is a fly in the ointment.

The nineteenth century gave birth to the new science of Comparative Religion, and there came to the field three movements for the reformation of Islam. One was in India, one in Persia and one in Arabia.

The Indian movement is known as the Ahammadiya movement. It is a liberal movement and admits the prophet-hood of Ramacandra and Sri Krishna and honours their scriptures as true <sup>1</sup>.

The Bahai movement of Persia goes a step further. It says that prophets come down in order to remove the defects of the old religions and bring them up to date. Thus it was that Jesus came down to cure the defects of Judaism and Mohammad came down to cure the defects of Christianity.

Similarly Bahauulla has come down in the present age to cure the defects of Islam, viz to teach it the lesson of "the Brotherhood of Man" in place of "the Brotherhood of Muslims" only<sup>2</sup>.

The Wahabi movement of Arabia is a reactionary movement. It cannot tolerate the idea of equality of men. According to it the Arabs are the chosen people of Allah, and the safety of Islam lies in casting off all foreign influence and sticking to the Arabic Koran alone<sup>3</sup>.

It is to be noted that by "foreign influence", the influence of Persia, i. e. the influence of Sufism, is particularly meant.

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1 (i) De Lacy—Islam at the Cross Roads, p. 104

(ii) Islamic Review—September 1929, p. 309.

2. (i) Sell—Faith of Islam, p. 150.

(ii) Bahauulla—The Book of Ighan, p. 142.

3. Cash—The Expansion of Islam, p. 191

For the first article of the faith of the Sufis is the equality of all prophets.

हर नबी ओ हर वलिरा मस्लकी इस्त ।

लीक बा हक मिरवद जुमलह् एक इस्त ॥ Masnavi 1-3086

[ Every Prophet has a different way, but all of them lead to God ]

According to the Wahabis, this dictum of the Sufis is only the thin end of the wedge. It starts by declaring the equality of all prophets and ends by establishing the superiority of the non-Semitic prophets over the Semitic. The movement must be nipped in the bud. The Musalman has no need to take notice of the worth of the other prophets.

This seems to be the effect of a superiority complex (or the reflex of an inferiority complex). The fall of Satan is said to be due to his superiority complex which found expression in his refusal to show respect to Adam, on the ground that he was made of clay, while as an angel, he himself was made of fire. It is said that in revenge for his fall, and out of spite against Adam, Satan infused the deadly poison of superiority complex in all men.

इल्लते इबलीस अना खयरी बुदस्त ।

वीन मज् दर नफ्से हर मखलुक हस्त ॥ Masnavi 1-3216

Everyone considers himself to be the best of all men, and therefore his own religion to be the best of all religions.

No doubt there is a sense in which one's own Prophet is to be looked upon as the best of all prophets, as otherwise a man may not have the incentive to follow his dictates implicitly.

Thus the Hindu Sastra says

मन्नाथः श्रीजगन्नाथो मद्गुरुः श्रीजगद्गुरुः

[ My 'God' is the God of all men, and my 'Prophet' is the Prophet of the whole world. ]

So far so good. But in order that one's faith (in his own Guru) may not be forced on another, the Sastra adds in the same breath

ममात्मा सर्वभुतात्मा तस्मै श्रीगुरुवे नमः

[ The other selves are also my self. The same Guru manifests himself to all men, and to that Guru, I bow (i. e. to my Guru, as the particular manifestation of the Common Supreme Guru ). ]

But the Wahabi does not like to lend his ears to anybody's advice. Unfortunately for us, Dr Muhammad Iqbal, the most talented Muslim poet philosopher of the 20th century, chose to join hands with the Wahabis. In his early youth, when he had prepared the thesis for his doctorate ( Development of Persian Metaphysics) he was enamoured of the Sufi movement and its saints. But with age, this generosity wore off. He realised the wisdom of the Wahabis, and Sufism now began to prick him. He hurled ridicule on Hafiz, the greatest of the Sufi poets :

सरखोश अज दरवाजेह ए मयखानेह हा ।

जल्ब दुज्दे रह जाने काशानेह दा ॥ Israr-i-Khudi

[ He is a drunkard, begging at tavern doors, and stealing glimpses of beauty from lattices. ]

Hafiz is looked upon by the Sufis, not merely as a poet but as a god-intoxicated saint. Iqbal's superciliousness raised a chorus of protest from all sides. Iqbal realised that by trying to disgrace Hafiz he is bringing disgrace on himself. Iqbal resiled and did not bring out these lines in the second edition of *Israr i Khudi*<sup>1</sup>.

1. Nicholson—*Israr-i-Khurdi* ( translation ) Introduction, ( p. xiii )



Iqbal professes great reverence for Jalal. But that seems to be a mere lip-service. If he had any genuine regard for Jalal, he would not have advised the Musalmans to purge Islam free of all Iranian influence.

अज् सवादे कावह चु आहु रमीद ।

नावके सय्याद पहलुयश दरीद,

Israr-i-Khudi—1501

[ When the deer ( of Islam ) strayed out of the sacred precincts of Mecca, the arrows of the hunter pierced her sides. ]

Iranian influence does certainly include the influence of Jalal, the greatest Iranian of modern times.

The Masnavi furnishes all the higher truths of Islam and constitutes its esoteric chapter. Bereft of Masnavi, Islam would look like a decapitated trunk—not a very seemly sight.

But when a man is possessed by the Devil, he loses all sense of proportion.

कीन चे घुल्लस्त अय खुदा वर गरदनम्

वर नेह घुल बाशद के गुयद मन मनम्

Masnavi, 1-2449

[ A man possessed by the Devil, goes on repeating “it is I it is I”. ]

Maha-Ratu Zarathushtra gives to this mentality the name of अहमी-ध्वहमी (Sukta 32-8).

But all men are not possessed by the Devil. They are not likely to give up the Masnavi in order to suit the taste of the Wahabis. They are likely to cry out.

गर पलीदम वर नजीफम अय शेहान

इन न खानम् पस चे खानम दर जहान

Masnavi 6-1196

[ What else would we read, if not the Masnavi ? ]

Jalal expresses his views on faked conversion by an interesting dialogue.

A Zarathustrian was asked by a Muslim to adopt Islam. The Zarathustrian replied, "I am a Magh ( Zarathustrian ), (1) either because God wished it or (2) In spite of His not wishing it. If God wished it, why should I change my religion ? It God did not wish it and still I became a Magh, then there is some one who is more powerful than God, and I would worship the stronger one than your God."

चून खोदा मि ख्वास्त आज मन सिदक इ जुफ्त ।

ख्वास्त-ए उ चेह शवद चून पेश अश ना रफ्त ॥

5-2918

Loyalty to Islam does not warrant the repudiation of the Gatha. The greatness of Hazrat Muhammad lies in the fact that he intuitively realised the value of the underlying principles of Mazda Yasna ( monotheism, aniconism, caste-equality ) and preached them with all his ability. Islam no doubt happened to repress the Iranian religion, but to a large extent the Iranians have to thank themselves for that. The later Iranians had scant regard for the basic principles of Zarathustra, and while professing a lip-deep loyalty to the great Prophet, they scattered to the four winds all those vital and vitalising principles of religion which were the main items of Zarathustra's reformation, and the only reason for his establishing a new church. Through their folly Mazda Yasna degenerated into Yazata Yasna. When they set up Mithra as the co-partner of Mazda<sup>1</sup> and bowed down to the image of Anahita<sup>2</sup> they themselves had murdered Mazda Yasna.

Islam only buried the corpse. These people altogether

1. Dhalla—History of Zoroastrianism, p. 185

2. Dhalla—History of Zoroastrianism, p. 226

forget that "when Zarathustra dissented from the Brahmans, it could not be merely to adopt the same pantheism and polytheism in a different language. The teaching of Zarathustra must have been something quite different"<sup>1</sup> They did not realise how grotesque it was and how derogatory to the sovereignty of Mazda to describe Him as doing worship to Vayu<sup>2</sup>. They dethroned Mazda from His high pedestal and were in consequence themselves disgraced. Zarathustra had met with vehement opposition, sometimes so vehement that success seemed doubtful even to this sturdy prophet (Sukta 46-2). The opponents had retreated before the profound majesty of this super-Prophet, but as soon as his powerful personality went out of sight, they tried to recoup their position. They succeeded in seducing some followers of Mazda Yasna, who imperceptibly glided back into Deva Yasna. For the religion of the Yashta is nothing but Deva Yasna in disguise. A foolish friend may sometimes do more harm than an open enemy, and the spirit of the Gatha may well cry out "save me from my friends".

The attack of Islam was levelled more against the religion of the Yashta than against the religion of Yasna.

As a matter of fact Islam upholds all the root principles of the Dina of Mazda Yasna—monotheism, aniconism and caste-equality. In this view of the matter Islam may be looked upon as an ally of Mazda Yasna, rather than an enemy.

The drawback of Islam was that it stopped short at the Dina of the Gatha and did not rise up to its Cisti. It was satisfied with exoteric Mazda Yasna and did not enter into the religion of esoteric Mazda Yasna. Islam thus remained a religion of Law and failed to rise to be a religion of Love. And it is well-known how 'Love is lawless and Law is

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1. Bilimoria—Zoroastrianism in the Light of Theosophy. p. 48

2. Haug—Religion of Parsis, p. 214

loveless\*<sup>1</sup>. Iranian Muslims tried to cure Islam of this fatal defect which is responsible for its extreme intolerance. They utilised the goodness of Hazrat Ali for incorporating the Cisti of the Gatha into Islam. For Ali is claimed by them to be the source of Sufism, and Sufism is nothing but the Cisti of the Gatha expressed in a language that uses many Arabic words. His function as the medium of the propagation of Sufism is the reason why Hazrat Ali is held in so much respect by the Iranians. His rank is next only to Hazrat Muhammad. According to some it is not even inferior. For Ali is the first of the Imams and the rank of an Iman is considered to be greater than that of a Nabi<sup>2</sup>. This is how the Iranian reconciled himself to Islam. According to him, the scripture of Muhammad repeated the Dina portion of the Gatha, and the message of Ali, its Cisti portion. This solution does not commend itself to Dr. Iqbal. He does not believe in the tradition that Hazrat Muhammad taught the principles of Sufism to Hazrat Ali<sup>3</sup>.

As a matter of fact it is very difficult to ascertain which tradition is authentic and which is not. Some protagonists of Islam had resorted to the process of inventing traditions in order to remove what seemed to them to be the deficiency of the Koranic religion. There were innumerable such admirers and each one of them wished to lend his hand to this pious task. The result was that an uncountable number of traditions grew up about what Hazrat Muhammad said or did in a particular circumstance. These would be the rules of conduct for the guidance of the faithful to follow in every situation. But everyone had his own ideas about what constituted the

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1. Abdul Hakim—Metaphysics of Rumi, p. 62

2. Abdul Hakim—Metaphysics of Rumi, p. 112

3. Iqbal—Development of Persian Metaphysics, p. 107

excellence of a religion and the traditions were very often found to be quite contradictory.

Thus the necessity of sifting the genuine traditions became very urgent. Six eminent doctors took up the task, and of them Abu Bukhari is said to have been the most successful. His compilation "Sahi Bukhari" is reputed to be the most reliable book on Hadis and, on account of his outstanding ability, Abu Bukhari is considered to be one of the four pillars of Islam<sup>1</sup>. For next to the Koran, Hadis is the most important source of the creeds of Islam.

But the difficulty of the task may readily be recognized from the fact that out of sixty thousand current traditions, Abu Bukhari had to reject fifty seven thousand traditions as spurious. He retained only three thousand as genuine<sup>2</sup>.

Dr. Iqbal had his reasons for disbelieving the tradition, but it were better if he had believed it. If he could be sure about the Arabic origin of Sufism, he would not have been inclined to throw it off as a foreign infection, but unfortunately he developed a keen sense of the untouchability of the Iranian, and seems ready to suggest that Islam should rather be denuded of Sufism than admit the supremacy of Iran, by borrowing its Cisti cult—the deer should be protected from the arrow of the hunter, as he expresses it. This attitude of Dr Iqbal is rather unfortunate. It ultimately developed into Arya-phobia and resulted in the creation of Pakistan—at the harrowing agony of crores of innocent men uprooted from home by the largest displacement of civil population in the world. For Dr. Iqbal is said to be responsible for designing Pakistan and Mr. Jinnah for executing

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1. Zwemer—A Muslim Seeker after God, p. 20

2. Guillaume—Traditions of Islam, p. 29



it<sup>1</sup>. The large majority of the Sufis however does not think of repudiating the heritage of Iran. According to them Sufism is the crown of Islam and bereft of Sufism, Islam would be a very poor show, as Hafiz exclaims :

गर मुसलमानी अजीन बुवद के हाफीज़ दारद ।

आह अगर अज़ पये इमरुज़ बुवद फरदाइ ॥

[If what Hafiz practises is real Islam, then may a tomorrow not follow today. ]

Love is the master key for entry into the spiritual world. Even among human beings a man would not open himself up to another who does not love him; he hides his inmost feelings from a stranger. Similarly one who does not love God, has no access to the inmost being of God. He cannot enjoy the love of God, and cannot experience the love that God entertains towards his earthly friends. His Spiritual life is bound to remain dwarfed. Love for God finds expression in love for men (Sukta 46-13). In the absence of such love, Islam would continue to be the brotherhood of Musalmans only, and would not develop into the brotherhood of Man. For it is not by hate or aggression that the Brotherhood of Man may be established.

तरसम न रसी ब काबा अय आरब ।

इन राह के तु मी रवी ब तुर्कीस्तान अस्त ॥

[ I am afraid O Arab, that you will not reach the Kaba. For the road you have taken leads to Turkistan. ]

The Iranian Sufi had offered the cup of Love to Dr. Iqbal. If not for the value of its contents, at least out of courtesy to these self-less devotees, he should not have refused the sip.

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1. Arberry—The Mysteries of Selflessness ( रसुज़े बेखुदी )  
preface, p. ix

बुती चुन माह जानु ज़द मय चुन लाल पीश आवर्द ।

तु गुइ ताइबम हाफिज़ ज़ साकी शर्म दार आखर, ॥

[ The moon-faced Saki kneels down and holds up to you the cup of melted ruby and Hafiz you persist that you are an abstainer. Are you not ashamed of your discourtesy and lack of chivalry ? ]

Love of God easily crops up as love of man. Brotherhood of Man is the natural corollary of the Fatherhood of God. And a saintly son of Iran took up this idea. He is Bahau'lla, the founder of Bahaism.

Bahau'lla came from pure Aryan stock<sup>1</sup>. Just as Sufism insisted on the principle of Love, Bahaism insists on the principle of the Unity of Mankind. Unity of Mankind is a main ideal of the Gatha. Atharvan Zarathustra reproves the Karpans for the offence of disrupting the Unity of the Wor'd. "Do not give your acquiescence to the ways of the Karpans. They are the breakers of the unity of the world (गवोइ आरोइश् आ सेन्दा). By their words and deeds they lead mankind to perdition" (Yas 51-14)

The underlying idea is this. One should not be concerned with only a portion of the mankind, and try to make profit at the expense of other nations. He should not be satisfied with the welfare of his own nation only ; he should strive for the welfare of all the nations. He should be a Viswamitra (cosmopolitan). This idea is very tersely expressed in the Angirasa Veda ( माता भूमिः पुत्रो अहम् पृथिव्याः -12-1-12 )

[The earth is my mother, I am the son of the whole globe.]

A cosmopolitan is friendly with all the nations of the world. The necessary implication is the toleration of other Faiths — "Live and let live," as it is now expressed. Maha Ratu Zarathustra had set the exalted example of such

1. Holley — Bahai ( The Sprit of the Age ) p. 26.

toleration, when he called a seminar of all the saints, and honoured each one suitably to his own denomination (sect).—Yas 51-22.

Not mere passive toleration;—Atharvan Zarathustra admonished a friendly attitude towards the Apostles of every country. "They are the Apostles of every country, who develop bliss (of Mazda) in men—through Conscience, Rectitude and virtuous deeds. May these heros lend their help to our noble cause"—Yas 48-12.

This cosmopolitan outlook is the result of the philosophic build of the Iranian mind. The Gatha taught that the function of religion was to solve the riddle of the life.

कथा अयारे दक्षारा फेरसयाइ दीशा ।

अइवी थाइहू गणयाहू तनुषि चा ॥

Yas 43-7

[ When would you know the mystery of "the Body and the Soul ?" ]

Thus mere formal worship did not satisfy the Iranian. And as soon as Islam entered Iran, the Iranian started the Shia sect, in order to introduce into Islam, all his traditional religious principles.

The first developement was the Ismailian branch, who asserted the immortality of the Soul (Urvan). They said that belief in the survival of the soul (Metempsychosis) was not inconsistent with Islam.

The second development was the Sufi branch who asserted that worship through Love (*asketi*) had been commended by Hazrat Muhammad.

The third development is the Bahai branch, who claim that the establishment of the Brotherhood of Man, is a main objective of religion.

## THE FOREMOST PROPHET

According to Islamic traditions, Hazrat Muhammad is the teacher of exoteric Islam (*tarikah* and *shariat*), and he left to Hazrat Ali, the task of teaching esoteric Islam (*hakikat* and *marifat*). As the philosophic Iranian is fond of esoteric truths, the Shia sect became very devoted to Hazrat Ali; more devoted to Hazrat Ali than to any body else. This is how Bab, the predecessor of Bahau'lla, declared "O Ali, none hath known God, save I and Thou, and none hath known Me, save God and Thou, and none hath known Thee, save God and I." (Browne—The New History of the Bab, p. 331).

The Shias use the name of Ali, as symbolical for the revival of the Iranian creeds, and that accounts for this excessive and exclusive devotion of Bab towards Ali. There is apparently no other reason for such deep reverence.

The interpretation put on the Koran by the successive bands of Iranian thinkers (the Ismailis, the Sufis and the Bahais) serve to embellish Islam, and create considerable good-will in its favour. Thus the Iranians may be considered to be the best friends of Islam. And the Iranians carried on their reformation under the aegis of the name of Hazrat Ali.

In his abounding zeal for getting the Ideal of the Brotherhood of Man accepted by the nation, Bab stated that "the Bayan" was the Scripture of the present age. "In the age of Moses the Pentateuch was the Scripture; in the age of Jesus, the New Testament; in the age of Muhammad, it was the Koran, and in the present age, it is the Bayan" (The Book of Agha, p. 142).

This caused extreme annoyance to a section of the Muslims, who thought that the Bahais intended to discard Islam. But this was a mistake. The Bahais did not *repudiate* Islam. They only wanted to reform it. Bahau'lla respected the prophethood of Hazrat Muhammad and used to go to mosque to say his prayers.

Bahau'lla had been fascinated by the ideal of the unity of mankind. It is a pity that his attention did not turn to the Gatha, which is the original source of this ideal. The Gatha started with the idea of serving the whole of mankind (*ksnevisa geus ca urwanem*. Yas 28-1) and proposed to bring about the salvation of the whole mankind (*gavoi ksvidem ca* Yas 29-7). Then again, the Gatha is the earliest national scripture of Iran, and no religion may be considered to be truly national to Iran, unless it provides some scope for the recognition of the Gatha. If an Iranian does not honour the Gatha, who else will? Even Hazrat Muhammad referred to the Gatha (the source of "the Din" of the Koran) by the name of Furkan, and alluded to Khizir (the earliest propounder of Sufism) as the preceptor of Moses (Koran, 18-64). Hazrat Muhammad had been generous enough to declare that every nation had its own Prophet (Koran, 10-48, 16-38) and that they taught in the language of that nation (Koran, 14-4), and that on the Day of Judgment these people will be judged by their loyalty to that book (Koran, 45-27). Thus if an Iranian follows his National Scripture (the Gatha), it may not be considered to be a violation of the laws of the Koran.

It is to be noted that when Mazda Yasna is called a national religion, it is not intended to narrow down its scope and confine it to Iran alone. Mazda Yasna is a World Religion meant for the uplift of the whole world. The Gatha started with the idea of serving the whole world, and it is for the salvation of the whole mankind that the Soul of the World approached Ahura Mazda (Yas 29-1). Atharvan Zarathustra chides Karpan and Usiksh for their oppression on the world (Yas 44-20), because the welfare of the whole world was his aim (Yas 34-14). Thus Mazda-Yasna is both a national, as well as a world religion. 'To Internationalism, through





Nationalism,' is the scheme, that Zamad-agni Zarath-Ustra had set up, and it was a very sound scheme.

Acceptance of the Gatha would be the happy consummation of the Bahai movement. It is only then that the Bahais would come to know the ideal religion which they are groping for

आरी इन अस्य अस्त लेकिन अस्य कु ।

बा खुद आ अय शेहसवारे अस्य जु ॥ Masnavi 1-1119

[Yes, it is *a* horse; but it is not *the* horse]

But if Bahauulla did not actually accept the Gatha, he accepted all its principles, and taught one to look beyond the Koran and thereby paved the way for the acceptance of the Gatha. For that reason, he deserves the gratitude of all of them who are devoted to the Gatha.

Acceptance of the Gatha need not, however, mean repudiation of the Koran. There is considerable resemblance between the two scriptures on essential principles. Both of them assert the sovereignty of God and denounce polytheism and idolatry with vehemence. And in the higher issues of life, difference of language does not count :

यकीस्त तुर्की ओ ताजी दरिन मोआमलेह् हाफेज ।

हदीसे इश्क बयान कुन बहर ज़बान के तु दानी ॥

[Turkish or Arabic does not matter. Hafiz, sing the glory of Love in any language that you know - in the Iranian as well as in the Arabic]

Bahauulla sings the glory of God, both in Persian and Arabic. He may be considered to be the *link between Islam and Mazda-Yasna*.

Whatever may have been the original impulse of Islam, by the successive waves of reformation introduced by the Ismailis, the Sufis, and the Bahais, Islam approximated to

Mazda-Yasna more and more, so that Islam may now be considered to be an ally of Mazda-Yasna.

The Iranian knows how to carve a friend out of stone.

हासिल इन आमद के यार-ए जमा बाश ।

इम चु बुतगर अज हजर यारी तराश ॥

Masnavi 2-2150

[Learn how to turn the foe into a friend]

And in the art of carving out a friend, Jalal has no equal.  
He converts Islam into an ally of Mazda Yasna.

The failure of the Greek religion is attributed to the fact that it drags down God to the level of man, instead of raising man to the level of God. Puranic Hinduism is equally guilty of such degradation and it led Dayananda Saraswati to repudiate the Puranas altogether. Mazda Yasna is absolutely free from such blemish. Turpitude as ascribed to Indra in the Puranas, or frivolity associated with Siva in Kalidasa's *Kumar Sambhava*, is inconceivable in Ahura Mazda. This is to a large extent due to Mazda's being Ahura (unembodied). But whatever may be the reason, the exemplar of Ahura Mazda is calculated to uplift man and not to degrade him. The austere dignity of god-head has been maintained in Islam, and that is the noblest feature of Islam. Jalal appreciated this sternness and became fond of Islam.

The Gatha has declared the exalted austerity of Mazda in the following Rik

परे वाओ वीस्पाइश् परे वओखेमा ।

दएवाइश्-चा खूफ् स्वाइश् मरयाइश्-चा । Yasna 34-5

[I know you to be the Supermost—Supreme above all, over angels, men and beasts. ]

Jalal brings out the inward sense of this mantra as he says

हीन मकुन बाबा के रुझे नाज. नीस्त ।

मर खुदा रा खीशी ओ अम्बाज. नीस्त ।

Masnavi 3-1317

[ Beware Baba, do not do this. There is no room for frivolity. God has not got a kin or a partner ]

घयरत आन बाशद के उ घयरे हमा अस्त ।

आन के अफज़ न अज़ बयान ओ दमदमा अस्त ॥

Masnavi 1-1718

[ This is His uniqueness, that He is other than all things, and beyond all description and prattle ]

Jalal's love for Islam is evident in every page of the Masnavi, but that did not make him blind to the beauties of Mazda-Yasna. He welcomed Islam, but could hardly think of jettisoning Mazda-Yasna. He would entertain both.

Jalal had the greatest reverence for Hazrat Muhammad. But his reverence for Atharvan Zarathustra, whom he designates "Husam-ud-din", the Sword of Religion, is not less fervent.

As a matter of fact Jalal asserts Husamuddin, and not any one else, to be the Soul of Masnavi,

हमचुनान मकसुद-ए मन ज़ीन मस्नवी

अय ज़िया उल हक हुसामउद्दीन तु इ ॥

Masnavi 4-754

[ O Husammuddin, You are the soul of this Masnavi ]

There need not be much doubt about the identity of Husamuddin. He is not any of the Semitic Prophets mentioned in the Bible or the Koran. In that case there would not have been any need for hiding his real name, and using a fictitious

name for fear of the fanatics. He could praise such a Prophet openly

मुर्ग ओ माही दानद आन अयहाम रा ।

के सेतुदम मुजम्मल इन खुशनाम रा ॥

ता बर उ आहे हसुदान कम वज्द ।

ता खयालश रा ब दन्दान कम गज्द ॥

Masnavi 3-2117/18

[Even the birds and the fish are aware that in praising him, I resorted to allegory, but I praised him and him alone. I used a fictitious name, so that the fanatics might not curse him and gnash their teeth at him ]

But in spite of his profuse regard for Arabic history the Iranian blood of Jalal sometimes cries out

पारसी गुइम हीन ताजी बेहेल् ।

हिन्दु-ए आन तुर्क बाश अय आब ओ गेल ॥

Masnavi 3-2839

[ Give up Arabic, speak Persian. O man of clay ; continue to be a Hindu, even amongst the Turks ]

It is very likely that it is Zarathustra, the Soul of Iran, who is the Lord of Jalal's heart. For we do not know of any other illustrious non-Semitic Prophet who exerted any influence on the life of Jalal. It is well known that Hafiz became the Poet-Saint through the inspiration of Khizir. The same thing may have happened in the case of Jalal as well. Very frequently the inspirer of Sufism is referred to by Jalal, as 'Khizir' and on solemn moments as 'Husamuddin'. And following the Shiah proverb which says "Though I do not believe Ali to be God, I believe that he is not far from being so" (Claud Field—Persian Literature, P. 30), we may hold that if Khizir is not Zarathustra, he is not far from being so.

In any case Jalal was extremely devoted to Hazrat Muhammad *as well as to another Prophet* whom he names as Husamuddin. There is thus room for thinking that Jalal wished for a synthesis.

Jalal was acting in the spirit of Zarathustra's admonition which desires the integration of the non-Parsis. (Yasna 46-12) for, as he says, the rose is a rose in whichever country it may have bloomed :

शाखे गुल हर जा के रुयद हम गुल अस्त ।

खुम्मे मुल हर जा के जुशद हम मुल अस्त ॥

Masnavi 6-178

This is why he proceeded to put a new interpretation on the Koran—to pour new wine into the old bottle.

आबे हयवान खान, मखान इन रा सुखन ।

रुहे नव बीन दर तने हर्फ-ए कोहन ॥ Masnavi 1-2516

And Jalal boasts that he has collected all that was worthful in the Koran

मन अज कुरान मघज रा बर दाशतम् ।

उस्तखान पिशे सगान अन्दाखतम् ॥

[ I have extracted the marrow out of the Koran and flung the dry bones to the dogs ]

One may say that Jalal suggested seeing Zarathustra in Muhammad and Muhammad in Zarathustra.

अहद-ए इसा बुद ओ नौबत-ए आन-ए उ ।

जान-ए उ मुसा, ओ मुसा जान-ए उ ॥ Masnavi 1-325

[ It was the epoch of Jesus and the turn was his. He was the soul of Moses, and Moses was the soul of him ]

This is at least the way how one can accommodate both Mazda-Yasna and Islam.



In India, the cult of Agama shattered the idea of race superiority and invited the Kol, the Bhil and the Santhal to the fold of Hinduism, just as Maha Ratu Zarathustra had kept the door open for Turanian Frayana (Sukta 46-12)<sup>1</sup>. Mazda is not a "trading God", like Jehovah who had entered into a covenant with the Israelites, that they would continue to be "a *chosen* race" if they would only worship him. Mazda does not permit indulgence to any race.

हीन मकुन बाबा के रुझे नाज् नीस्त् ।

मर खुदारा खीशी ओ अम्बाज् नीस्त् ॥

Masnavi, 3-1317

[ Do not do so, my child. It is not a matter of joke. Khoda has no kinsman or relative.]

Sassanian Iran had neglected this important truth ( equality of all men ) and Islam dealt the necessary shock to rouse it from the slumber of race-arrogance. But that does not detract from the excellence of the religion of the Gatha.

The Gatha offers the religion of Love ( Sukta 32-1 ) and Sufism, based on the Gatha, is bound to be the future religion of Iran. For the Iranian mind yearns, above all, for the Iranian religion, as Pour-i-Davoud expresses it :

1. It is interesting to find a Turanian (Tura Kanaseya) officiating as a priest at the consecration of Janamejaya ( Aitareya Brahmana 7-5-34 ) —Pargiter—Ancient Indian Historical Traditions, p. 113.

Bhagavan Zarathustra is the first prophet to enunciate unambiguously the principle of race-equality, and it spread to India. Indians gave effect to the idea through the Agama (Tantra) cult, and assimilated the Kols, the Bhils and the Santals. Sassanian Iranians neglected the principle, and did not care to level up the Beduins. As a result, so soon as these Beduins got the opportunity they tried to level down the Iranians. [ Koraish, in which clan Hazrat Muhammad was born, is a tribe of the Beduin—Wells—Outline of History, vol II, p. 411 ]



जु इन से गानेह तारम ओ काख पूर मी गजीद यकी ।  
अर न बुद वय रा देल काने मेहेर व आतशगाह ॥

Puran Dukht Nama—5

[ Pour would have resorted to some one of the three Semitic shrines, only if his mind were not possessed by the love of the Fire Temple.]

We learn from the monthly magazine Parsiana ( August 1965, p. 13 ) that fifty thousand Iranian Musalmans are eager to go back to the religion of their forefathers. They are only the pioneers. Others may follow.

Let us not therefore be discouraged by the clamour of the reactionaries. Let us go on preaching the principles of the Gatha with the help of Jalal (1207-1273 A. D.) in Persian, and Kabir (1410-1518 A. D.) in Hindi. For the Bhargava Veda ( Avesta ) is as much important to the Aryas, as the Angirasa Veda. Not to the Aryas alone but to the whole religious world.

Even at the dawn of civilisation Maharshi Atri had asked us to be equally respectful to both the cults :

यक्ष्वा महे सौमनसाय रुद्रम् ।  
नमोभिर् देवम् असुरम् दुवस्य ॥

Rigveda 5-42-11

There is truth in the Deva cult, there is truth in the Asura cult. Therefore join together in worshipping Rudra, who is both a Deva and an Asura.

We have seen how the ideal of Vishnu evolved as the result of the impact of Mazda Yasna. Thus there is considerable affinity between Vishnu and Mazda. Both are pre-eminently the God of Love, and there is much similarity between Vaishnavism and Sufism.

Some scholars are inclined to trace the development of Vaishnavism out of the Varuna hymns rather than the Vishnu

hymns of Rigveda<sup>1</sup>. And Varuna hymns are as good as Mazda hymns, for, Macnicol observes, "evidence of their identification is too strong to be rejected<sup>2</sup>. The doctrine of Ramanuja supplies the philosophical basis of both the cults, and the ecstasy of Hafiz may be said to be their common delight. Of all the varieties of love, both the cults give preference to *Madhura Rasa* ( the all absorbing love of the husband and the wife ) with this distinction, that while the Sufi devotee loves the Beloved with the love of the husband, the Vaishnava devotee does so with the love of the wife. The ideology of conjugal love is so strong a sentiment in the Sufi that the terror of the molla could not suppress it and Jalal could not help giving vent to it :

एक ओ जान हर दु नेहान अन्द ओ सतीर ।

गर अरुसश खान्देह् अम् अयबी म गीर, ॥

Masnavi, 1-1992

[ Life and Love are alike secret and sacred. If I (give out my innermost secret and ) call the Beloved the bride, kindly do not take offence at that.]

The "Gopis"<sup>1</sup> of India and the "Sufis" of Iran are the truest representatives of the cult of Love. An interesting anecdote is related over the matter. A Sufi poet uttered the following couplet in the court of Jehangir.

तु शबानेह मी नुमाइ बा बरे के बुदी इमशब ।

हनुज चश्म मस्त अस्तु असरे खुमार दारद

[You look sleepy. On whose breast did you pass the night ? Your eyes are still tipsy and bear marks of dissipation.]

1. H. C. Roy Chaudhuri—Early History of Vaishnavism, p. 10.

2. Macnicol—Indian Theism, p. 11.

3. A Gopi is a lover of Gopa, another Vedic name for Vishnu. Cf, अपश्यम् गोपाम् अनिपद्यमानम् आ च परा च पथिभिश्च चरन्तम् ( Rigveda 10-177-3 )

विष्णुर् गोपाः परमं पाति पाथः ( Rigveda, 3-६5-10 )



In oriental countries a tribute is paid to the woman by judging her conduct with a higher standard of morality. Thus while imputation of adultery to the husband may be tolerated, imputation of adultery to the wife is very repulsive. Jehangir was highly annoyed at the vulgar taste of the poet and asked him to leave the court at once. The courtiers intervened and explained to him, that though the language is Persian, the poet was speaking in the Indian imagery. (i. e. as the aspersions of a wife to the husband)<sup>1</sup>

This difference in the outlook seems to be as old as the start. In the Bhagavata and other Puranas we find the story related, that after the churning of the (Caspian) sea while the Devas and the Asuras were still united, and sat together to partake of the ambrosia obtained by their joint labour, Vishnu appeared on the spot "in the form of a girl" and enticed the Asuras away from the feast. This is the figurative way of saying that the Iranians preferred to look upon the Beloved as a bride. This also attests the fact that the Indo Iranians were well aware that God is neither He, nor She, nor It.

शक्तिर् महेश्वरो ब्रह्म त्रयसुतुल्यार्थवाचकः ।

स्त्री पुम्-नपुंसकभेदः शब्दतो न परार्थतः ॥

Gandharva Tantra 34—34

[ The distinction of female, male and neuter does not apply to God. Such distinction is merely verbal and not real.]

The Ultimate Reality is nothing, and it is all. God is both transcendant and immanent and so the charge of anthropomorphism against the Indo-Iranians is only the vituperation of the ignorant. Kabir shows the way how one may practise the principles of Mazda Yasna in modern conditions of life. Thus Kabir's example may profitably be followed by the Parsis, of course with the Gatha as the supreme scripture of the church. Kabir does not budge an

1. नागरी प्रचारिणी पत्रिका—सम्बत १९८०—पृ. २८०

inch from the fundamental principles of Mazda Yasna. and yet he is in such a close friendship with the Hindus that the Kabirpanth has been mistaken to be a branch of Hinduism. It goes without saying that Yasna (Yajna) is an indispensable part of Parsi worship. There can be no question of giving it up. This was the original Vedic mode of prayer and was retained by Maha Ratu Zarathustra (Sukta 34-4). The Indians subsequently changed the Yajna form of worship by the Puja form. The Parsis have retained the original custom unchanged and it should be retained. In Din-i-Ilahi (championed by Akbar) which is only the Moghal version of Mazda Yasna, the custom was retained. Abul Fazal was placed in charge of tending the sacred Fire (Ain-i-Akbari, Vol II, p. 393)<sup>1</sup>.

Rational Muslims have recognised Masnavi as the second Koran. It is up to them to perceive that the Gatha is the source of the inspiration of the Masnavi, so that they should not stop with the Masnavi even, but go up to the Gatha, the original spring. This will strengthen the bonds of friendship between Muslims and Zarathustrians.

This is however a matter that is for the Muslims to decide for themselves. So far as the re-union of the Hindus and the Parsis is concerned, the road has been made easy by Jalal and Kabir and we (Hindus and Parsis) can, on no account, agree to give up Jalal and Kabir, nor should we agree to deprive ourselves of the benefit of their spiritual experience.

In this sacred task of maintaining and consolidating Hindu-Parsi unity, we can get the greatest help from Ganadhara (mass-leader) Govinda Sinha who tried to synthesise the two cults into one by combining the best features of both. In this matter he followed the lead of the Agama (Tantra) Sastra which attempts a synthesis of Vaisnavism and Saivism.

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1. Ghani--Persian Literature in Moghal Court, vol III p. 247





Govinda Sinha revived the important rite of Congregational Prayer which infuses vigour and vitality in the nation more profusely than any other rite can do. The periodical Darsa-Paurnamasa ceremony (the Darun ceremony of the Parsis) when performed as a Satra, is the proto-type of congregational prayer. It used to be celebrated on the Darsa (New Moon) and the Paurnamasa ( Full Moon ) days, Amavasaya being allotted largely to the Iranians, and Purnima to the Indians. The Satra is a ceremony in which all members must participate, instead of leaving it to the priests to carry on<sup>1</sup>. The Sikhs call it Dewan, i. e. the congregation of godly men. The congregational prayer is calculated to keep to the forefront all national problems, and to remind the participants, that they cannot live separately, i. e. except as members of a larger whole, if they intend to play an honourable part in the history of the world. Ganadhara Govindra Sinha had fully realised the importance of the Guru-Grantha (National Scripture) for establishing national solidarity. He realised it as clearly as the Muslim divines. 'Koran is the great bond of Islam. No matter from what race the convert may have come, no matter what language he may speak, he must learn in Arabic, and repeat by rote, portions of the Koran in every act of public worship<sup>2</sup>. The last words on the lips of the martyred Apostle are thus reported

आज्ञा भयी अकालकी तबहि चलाया पन्थ ।

सब शिखोंको हुक्म है गुरु मानियो ग्रन्थ ॥

[ It is under the orders of Akal that I have built up this sect. My direction to every Sikh is, that he should revere the Scripture as his Guru ]

1. Keith—Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanisad, p. 319.

2. Sell—Faith of Islam, p. 81.

Govinda Sinha knew quite well what makes a nation strong, and it would be the greatest folly on our part, if we refuse to accept his admonitions. He had taken up a handful of dust from Panjab, and created out of it a brigade of crusaders. The Gospel of Zarathustra and the Gospel of Ramacandra are complementary to each other and Sri Krishna makes a synthesis of them two. Govinda Sinha puts into practice, all the tenets, that Sri Krishna had taught to Arjuna. His life is a materialisation of the principles of the Gita. Thus Govinda Sinha united together the Hindu and the Parsi. The Rigveda loudly declares

महद् तद् बृष्णः असुरस्य नामा

Rig 3-38-4

[ "Mahat" is the name of that powerful deity. ]

This is a very significant line. It is evident that 'Mahat' here is a noun (and not an adjective meaning 'great'), being the name of a deity. It is a singular name, i. e. a name that singles out this deity from other deities. In other words, it is not the duplicate name for any of the other famous gods. Now then who is this great god—powerful Mahat ?

If we look to the adjective 'Asura' that leaves little doubt that Asura Mahat ( Mazat ) is none but Ahura Mazda—the same deity whom Viswamitra belauded as the embodiment of all deities.

महद् देवानाम् असुरत्वम् एकम्

Rig 3-55-1

[ The divinity of all the Devas is concentrated in Mazda ]

When the Rigveda accepts Mazda, as the sole representative of all the Devas, it is perversity to hold that there is more difference between the Hindu and the Parsi, than there is between the right arm and the left arm.

The wise words of Kabir, the leader of the Indian school of Sufism forms an integral part of Adi-Gratha, the scripture of Sikhism. Iranian features, like monothesisim and aniconism

form the basis of the Sikh cult. Yet Sat Guru Nanak appreciates the Hindu conception of Godhead as the Divine Mother

एका माई युक्ति बिआइ तिन चेले परवानु । Japji, 30

She is the Mother whom Ramakrishna Paramhansa worshipped and celebrated. Govinda Sinha develops the idea by translating Hindu scriptures like the Gita<sup>1</sup>, the Bhagavat, and the Candi, and by including the latter two in his Dasam Grantha which is the supplement to Adi Grantha.

How wonderfully does Guru Nanak negotiate with Islam. He says in the Adi Grantha :

बाबा अल्लहु अगम अपारु !

पाकी नाइ पाक थाइ सच्चा परवरदिगारु ॥

Sri Raga — Astapadia 1-1

In the 114 chapters of the Koran there is not a single passage where Allah has been addressed as "Father". The addition of the small word बाबा before Allah, at once changes sombre Islam into graceful Sufism. A green oasis is created in the breast of the arid desert. And we might imagine that the loving Father in heaven is delighted with the prattle of His beloved son and hastens to console him.

Govinda Sinha is the spiritual successor of Mahamuni Nanak. The Hindu and the Parsi are equally dear to him and he composes a portion of his Dasam Grantha (viz. the Jafarnama) in graceful Persian couplets.

The message of Mahamuni Nanak was carried to Bengal by Prabhupada Bijay Krishna Goswami, who left directions that some portion of the Grantha Sahib should be recited in his monastery every day.

My own preceptor Sri Premananda Tirthaswami Maharaj, a great admirer of Bijay Krishna, was equally fond of Indian

1. Mohan Singh —History of Panjabi Literature, p. 42.

and Iranian cults. He bade me to translate the Gatha into Bengali and blessed me when I was preparing the revised English edition of the Gatha. I believe that it is due to his benediction that the Parsi Zoroastrian Association of Calcutta came forward to publish "The Hymns of Atharvan Zarathustra". The present book is only a recast of the Introduction to "The Hymns of Atharvan Zarathustra."

I am grateful to my Parsi friends for the interest they took in my books. But for their help, I could not have given expression to my deep reverence to the foremost of the prophets. Sri Ardeshir N. Bilimoria of Navsari had collected money for the first edition of my translation of the Gatha (published in 1932). Sri Rustam T. Saklath induced the Parsi Zoroastrian Association of Calcutta to take up the publication of the Hymns of Atharvan Zarathustra. Sri P. H. Sidhwa pleaded with the Godrej Trust of Bombay to help the publication of the present book.

Hegel concludes that the universe evolved out of the Absolute through the dialectics of Thesis and Anti-thesis. These are the two forces that guide the trail of every development.

Hinduism is the Thesis of the Vedic religion, and Mazda yasna is its Anti-thesis. The Synthesis is reached in the Sikh Panth, that makes a complete course. Maharatu Zarathustra is the central figure in the play. It is hoped that the fascinating story of Atharvan Zarathustra would evoke as much adoration in the Hindu and the Sikh, as it does in the Parsis. It is Bhagavan Zarathustra who placed the Vedic religion on the soundest basis. To know him is to love him.

My thanks are due to Sri Purnendu Bhusan Datta Ray of Bharat Prakash Bhavan for the ungrudging help that he gave to bring the book through the press, and to Sri Jal R.

Mehta for his valuable suggestions. Sri Manindra Lal Caudhuri took the pains of correcting the proofs.

Maharatu Zarathustra is the earliest Protestant Prophet in the world. He removed the stains of polytheism (Yas 29-4), iconism (Yas 48-10) and caste-inequality (Yas 33-3) from Vedic religion, and race-inequality as well (Yas 36-12). He infused the spirit of heroism (Yas 49-7) in the nation.

He portrayed the image of ideal religion, by emphasising the factors that are essential for God-realisation, viz. (i) inseparability of Ethics and Religion (Yas 32-4) (ii) Immaculacy of character (Yas 33-9, 43-2) (iii) Detachment of witness-self (Yas 51-9) and (iv) Total surrender to Mazda (Yas 33-14).

He accepted the monism of Brahma, as the final truth of philosophy (Yas 48-9) and pointed to the hierarchy of excellence as the basis for belief in Personal God (Yas 50-10 and 28-8). He prescribed Love of God to be the highest worship (Yas 32-1) and depicted at-one-ment with Mazda as the state of salvation (Yas 44-17). He accepted the presence of the Ideal as the reality of God within man (Yas 48-10) and unification of the spiritual laws into a system (the system of Amesha Spentas) is his unique award.

A better and more comprehensive religion has not been preached. The worth of other religions is to be judged by their approximation to Mazda Yasna. Judging by the criterion that "what is inspiring, is inspired", the Gatha would be found to be the truly inspired Gospel.

Ahura Mazda himself had proclaimed it in Heaven and Zarathustra repeated it to the Maghavats (Yas 51-15).

Narada had gone to learn the truths of Panca-ratra devotion from Narayana Zarathustra, and Brihaspati had sent his son Kaca to learn from Bhrigu the secrets of the Gospel that confers immortality.

Hindus are grateful to the Parsi community for bring-



ing to their very threshold the celestial Gospel that would breathe life into the dead bones of the dreamy Indians, and teach them that religion is not a matter for the other world alone, it is a matter for this world as well.

May the lofty sermon of the Foremost Prophet of the world, the Gatha, the earliest of the Upanisads (embedded in the Bhargava Samhita) lead us all to the presence of Ahura Mazda.

The best religion is that which serves to keep the thought of Mazda constantly in our mind and thereby imperceptibly draws us nearer and nearer to Him in every moment of our life. When all other objects become insignificant to us, and Mazda happens to be our only thought and our only wish, Ahura Mazda is sure to make His appearance before us—before our mental as well as our physical eye. That is the experience of the saints all over the world. For the Formless can assume form and the Infinite can become finite. This is how the Universe ( yourself and myself ) came into existence. Love is the element that brings the mind to such one-pointed ecstasy, the flame that burns away all other objectives. This is the Fire that the Parsi worships.

चन्द अजीन अल्काज ओ एजमार ओ मजाज

सुज ख्वाहम सुज बा आन सुज साज

आतशी अज इश्क दर जान वर फरज

सर ब सर फिक्र ओ एबारत रा बे सुज Masnavi, 2-176213

[How long to dabble with words and phrases and cant. I want burning, burning. Take to burning. Light up a fire of love in the soul, burn thought and expression entirely away.]

May the religion of Love—the religion of सवस्. (Yas 51-15) 51-20), of उर्वाजिमा (Yas 32-1) and of आस्केति (Yas 44-17) of the Gatha—lead us to our Supreme destiny.

Yes, Parsi Din (i. e. Neo-Sufism) would be the future religion of the world. It would come into friendship with

Hinduism, by recognizing the Prisni as the supplement to the Gatha, and it would come into an understanding with Islam by recognizing the Koran as the Arabic echo of (the Dina portion of) the Gatha. The Gurudwara would be near by, to furnish the common platform for the Hindu-Parsi religious intercourse. And in every Fire Temple, the Gatha would be recited as the Universal Scripture of the human kind, and the Masnavi would be read as its commentary. The whole world would join in singing homage to the FOREMOST PROPHET OF HUMANITY.

माता ज़रथुस्त्रः, पिता ज़रथुस्त्रः,  
सखा ज़रथुस्त्रः, सखी ज़रथुस्त्रः ।  
सर्वस्वं ये ज़रथुस्त्रो दयालुः,  
नान्यं जाने नैव जाने न जाने ।

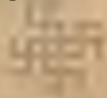
[Zarathustra is mother to me, Zarathustra is father to me. Zarathustra is my friend and he is my darling. Kind Zarathustra is my all-in all. I do not Know any one else, none I know, none. ]

ॐ तत् सत् हौं

यस् ता दए वेंग् अपरो मद्याँस चा,  
तरे-मांस्ता यो ईम् तरे-मन्यन्ता ।  
अन्येंग् अह्मात ये होइ अरेम् मन्याता,  
सओ प्यन्तो देग्-पतोइश स्पेन्ता दएना ।  
उवंथो वराता प्ता वा मज़्दा अहुरा ॥

Yasna 45-11

Mazda is the Saviour, and the All-conscious Holy Spirit. He is the Friend, the Brother, and the Father of even of those who deny Him.



## A. Mazda as Vedhas

## (1) Mazda is Varuna

ता प्रब्रवीषि बरुणाय वेधस् Rigveda 4-42-7

## (2) Mazda is the replica of Indra.

चकार ता कृणवन् नूनम् अन्या,<sup>1</sup>  
यानि ब्र वन्ति वेधसः सुतेषु । Rigveda 7-26-3

## (3) Mazda is Rudra (Siva)

अषाढाय सहमानाय वेधसे ।  
तिग्मायुधाय भरता शूणोतु नः Rigveda 7-46-1

## (4) Mazda is Visnu

यः पूर्वप्राय वेधसे नवीयमे ।  
सुमज्-जानथे विण्यवे ददाशति ॥ Rigveda 1-156-2

## B. Mazda as Mahat

(1) महद् तद् वृष्णः असुरस्य नामा Rigveda 3-38-4

Mazda (Mahat) is the name of the powerful Lord

(2) महद् देवानाम् असुरत्वम् एकम् । Rigveda 3-55-1

Mazda (Mahat) represents the divinity of all the gods.



# INDEX

## A

*Absolute, (Brahma)*—not mentioned in Koran 160, described in Masnavi 161

*Achamanians*—a branch of the Kaurava Dynasty 122, not mentioned by Arabic historians 20

*Adi grantha*—is the scripture of Sikhism 224, is a book that created a nation 206, includes the sayings of Kabir 244

*Aditi (Mother Goddess)*—active principle both of Siva and Visnu 41,

*Adityas, Vasus, Rudras*—are the Saktas, Vaisnavas and Saivas of Vedic period 41.

*Advaita vada in the Gatha* 95

*Afganistan*—said to be the scene of the Rigveda 73, 106

*Afshin*—desires to revive Mazda Yasna 134.

*Agama*—synthesises Vaisnavism and Saivism 205, integrates Non Aryans 238, assimilates Mazda Yasna 53.

*Agastya*—attempts a compromise between the Hindus and Parsis 55.

*Ahmadianism*—acknowledges the prophet-hood of Rama Krishna 220.

*Ahura*—the Word is found in Mantra Brahmana 53.

*Ahura Mazda*—duplicate of Varuna 42, mentioned in the Rigveda 76, 244

*Ahuratkesa*—is the original religion of the Indo-Iranians 28

*Aitareya Brahmana*—relates the conflict between Devas and Asuras 46.

*Akbar*—tended fire 242, prohibited cow-slaughter 200.

*Al Beruni*—translated Yoga Sutra 197.

*Ali*—is the prophet of esoteric Islam 132, 151, 226, 231, is symbolical for Iranians' revolt against orthodox Islam 231, his supreme position in Shiahism 132, not inferior to Muhammad 132. the first Imam 132, the other Light of Islam 132, Koran was intended for Ali 131, is the prophet of Persian Islam 131, 144.

*Amesa spentas*—seven stages in the pilgrim's march 85, not attributes of Mazda 101, not Lords of different regions 101, called "Citra—Sikhandins" in the Mahabharata 102.

*Ameretatat*—is belief in World-Soul 90.

*Ananda*—is Rafedra (Yas 28-1) and Kshnum (Yas 52) of the Gatha is essential elements of Brahma (94), particularly associated with Bhrigu 94.

*Angirasas*—spread east-ward 43, introduce Icon 44 preserve valuable books 156, 210

*Angirasa veda*—National Scripture of India 207, recognises the worth of variety 207, Keresani prohibits 75, complementary to Bhargava Veda 208.

*Arabia*—used to be a dependency of Iran 139.

*Arabs*—'see the trees, but not the wood' 186, were backward in material civilisation 141.

*Arabic Language*—25% is un intelligible 163.

*Arabian Nights*—borrowed from India 124.

*Arabic historians*—are ignorant of Achamenian Emperors 20.

*Arda viraf*—does not see the body of Mazda 188.



*Arya Samaj*—accepts the principles of the Gatha 208.  
no reason for quarrel with the Sikhs 200.

*Asura*—meaning of 26.

*Asuras*—earlier to the Devas 28, superior to the Devas 45,

*Asura Vedhas* (*Ahura Mazda*) in the Rigveda 76,

*Asuri metre* in the Yajur veda 74.

*Atharva veda*—meaning of 44, is supplementary to the three original Vedas 44, consists of two books at least of two currents Bhargava and Angirasa 2, 3. came into existence after the Indians and the Iranians separated 2, is said to be the Veda of Maghas 45

*Atri*—enunciates the great formula of Hindu-Parsi unity 72.

*Aurangzeb*—beheads Sufi leader Sarmad 162. says prayers on the battle-field 149.

*Avesta*—is the Iranian name for Bhargava veda 2,

*Azar Kaivan*—the Cisti saint of 17th century 129

## B

*Bab*—looks beyond Koran 231, his devotion to Ali 231

*Bactria*—cradle of Mazda-Yasna 110, homeland of Vasisthas 73, 115, some hymns of Rigveda composed in 73, 116, not far from India 19, 113, caste system not prevalent 81, camels are rumerous 19, 115.

*Bahram gar*—marries a Hindu bride 124, Gardavilla dynasty traced to him 124.

*Bahaism*—teaches Brother-hood of man 220, 229, is the third development of Shiaism 230, forms the link between Islam and Mazda-Yasna 233

*Bhrigus*—their leaders are Atharvans 21, are the Spitamas of the Gatha 44, were famed as Cistis 180.

*Bhrigus and Angirasa*s—relation between them 53, 54, go over to Greece 50, flame and ember 43, use different mantras in the same Yajna 48.

*Bhrigus and Vasisthas*—friendly relations between them 51.

*Bible (Old Testament)*—compiled in 450 B. C. 27.

*Bijoy Krishna Goswami*—carried Sikhism to Bengal 245.

*Bismilla*—arabic version of 'Ba-nam-e Yazdan' 137.

*Boghaskui Inscription*—proves prevalence of Vedic religion in Armenia 50, Anterior to Judaism 50.

*Brahma*—corresponds to Vahma 95, negative aspect of Iswara 99. keeps the balance between two Gunas (Manyus) 99, is a Conscious Entity 92, is described as Sat Cit Ananda 93, not inconsistent with Bhakti yoga 169, described in the Gatha 170.

*Brihaspati*—denounces an-iconic worship 14, 25 sends his son Kaca to learn the mysteries of Mazda Yasna 57.

*Brotherhood of Man*—is the aim of Bahaism 229 Nanak lays the foundation 210.

*Browne, E. G.*—is prejudiced against Avesta 9.

*Buddhism*—is Karma yoga 83 uses both Om and Hun 48.

*Bukhari*—sifts the traditions of Islam 227, is considered to be a pillar of Islam 227.

## C

*Caitanya*—representative of Hindu culture 204.

*Cakra Puja*—is congregational worship 209, revived by Govinda Sinha 243.



*Caste-system*—absent in Iran in the days of the Mahabharata 80.

*Cayamāna*—king of Bactria, attacks Sudas 49.

*Cedi*—is vedic name for Bactria 43, 115.

*Ceremonials*—discouraged in Mazda Yasna 59.

*Chandogya Upanishad*—relates the conflict between the Devas and Asuras 46.

*Christianity*—forestalled by Mazda Yasna 189.

*Christmas*—originated from Mithra worship 34.

*Cisti*—is the name for pre-Islamic Sufism 158, corresponds to Marifat of Islam 158, is the fruition of Dina 175 ; 196.

*Cistis (Zarathustrian Sufis)*—used to visit India 129.

*Citra Sikhandins*—is the name for Amesha spentas 13, 102.

*Comte*—advocated worship of Humanity 206.

*Conscience*—absence of the term in Koran 192.

*Conversion*—and reconversion in Vedic days 56.

*Creation*—different theories about 164.

*Dakhsha*—opposes introduction of Siva cult 67.

*Dara Shiko*—engraves "Prabhu" in his ring 200.

*Darsa and Paurnamāsa*—is Vedic congregational prayer 243.

*Darius*—claims to be a Kshatriya 121, leads expedition to Europe 120, 122.

*Dasa-rajna war*—between Indians and Iranians 49.

*Dasam Grantha*—is the supplement to Adi Grantha 245.

*Dasa-ratha*—marries in Armenia 117.

*Dayananda Saraswati*—adopts the principles of Bhargava Veda 203, rejects the Puranas 234, simplifies ceremonials 153, furnishes model for the practice of Mazda Yasnas in modern conditions 153.

*Deva*—had been an honourable term in Avesta 24, means a visible god 25.

*Devas and Asuras*—the story of their conflict in Aitareya Brahmana, Satapatha Brahman, and Chandogya Upanishad 46, Atri attempts a harmony 72, equality of status between them 70, churn the Caspian sea 241.

*Deva-Yana*—complementary to Pitri Yana 31, action and re-action between them 55, was prevalent in Armenia in 14th century B. C. 651.

*Deva yasna*—An innovation of the Angirasas 28, prevalent in Iran when Zarathustra was born 27.

*Dhyana yoga*—Vardhamana is the typical prophet 84.

*Dhrita-rastra and his brothers*—married Iranian brides 117.

*Dina*—a word borrowed in Koran from Avesta 137, 145.

*Din-i-Ilahi*—is the Moghal version of Mazda Yasna 242.

*Dugh- dhava*—is the name of the mother of Zarathustra 109.

## E

*Ethics*—is the true foundation of Religion 86.

## F

*Fatherhood of God*—Zarathustra prefers 159, 105, not mentioned in Koran 160, 245.

*Father's name*—son used to inherit 203.

*Fire Cult*—common both to Indians and Iranians 54, misconception about (187); zarathustra retains 187, 242.

*Fire Temple*—first built at Sanjan 128, Pour-i-Davood prefers 239.

*Fire*—Moses sees in the bush 188, Jews keep on altar 183, is the best symbol 187.

*Flesh*—iranians discontenanced its use in sacrifice 14.



*Fur-Kan*—is the prototype of Koran and seems to be the Koranic name for the Gatha 138, 142, 232.

## G

*Gatha*—is the cream of the Avesta 5, is the own word of Zarathustra 4, is the earliest Upanisad 12, inspires Swetaswatara Upanisad 12, is the scripture of the Pancaratras 16, its philosophic outlook 230, is the earliest scripture of the Saiva sect 216, is the National Scripture of Iran 232, to be recited in daily prayer 149, two parts of its religion 175.

*Gautama Buddha*—is the typical prophet of Karma yoga 83. teaches Ahimsa and Maitri 147.

*Gayatri of the Parsis*—impresses the importance of Ethics 35, why it offers homage to the prophet 89.

*Gazan Khan*—is the first Moghal King to adopt Islam 192.

*Genocide*—of Parsu Rama is figurative 104.

*Genealogy*—of Zarathustra, Ramcandra and Govinda 108.

*Ghazzali*—second Prophet of Islam 178, 189, equal of St. Augustine and Descartes 178, contrasted with Jalal 187.

*God*—Personal and Impersonal 99, 160, Transcendant and Immanent 185, 241, neither male nor female 241, is not featureless 97, not the result of wishful thinking 96.

*Govinda Sinha*—translated the Gita 155, 245, lived the Gita 155, 244, spiritual successor of Nanak 245, composed Dasam Grantha 245; completed the task of Hindu-Parsi synthesis 203, 232, impresses the importance of Guru Grantha 223, revived congregational prayer 223. translated the Bhagavat and the Candi 246, composed Jafarnama in Persian 245, follows the lead of the Agama 242.



*Gopism*—its difference from Sufism 241.

*Gorakshanath*—represents the Saiva cult 205. his influence on Kabir 205.

*Greek philosophers*—come over to Persia 126.

*Gunas*—correspond with Manyus 82, are said to be two in Rigveda 83.

*Guru Grantha*—its importance 150, 243.

## H

*Hadis (traditions of Islam)*—how far reliable 227.

*Halagu Khan*—was a Buddhist 191 192, challenged the invincibility of the Muslims 191, dealt the death-blow to Arab supremacy 191.

*Hafiz*—likes the sacred cord 194, is respected as a saint 222, appreciates Mansur 173, 177, his allegiance to Sufism 183 184.

*Haihayas*—are Hyonians ( Mongolians ) of Avesta 116.

*Hari Medhas*—is the Sanskritised name of Ahura Mazda 18, 67 has no image 14, changes to Satya Narayana 67.

*Haurvatat*—is belief in Soul 90.

*Haurvatat and Ameretat*—in the Koran and Talmud 95.

*Heliodorus ( Greek )*—adopted Vaisnavism 123.

*Herat*—mentioned in the Mahabharata 81, 119.

*Heno-theism*—as the religion of the Veda 33.

*Hindu*—origin of the name 106, comes to mean black 43.

*Hinduism*—its three main sects 203.

*Hiranya garbha ( golden egg )*—is the symbol of formless God 188.

*Hittites*—are the forefathers of the Armenians 50, worship Indra 50.

*Holy ghost*—its meaning 190.

*Hon*—is the Iranian equivalent of Om 47.

*Iblis*—derived 83.

*Iconolatry*—introduced by the Angirases 44, Zarathustra is the first prophet to protest 26.

*Ideal*—the presence of the ideal is the true basis of theism 88 indispensable 89.

*Imams*—are practically Persian Nabis 132, support non Arabic dogmas 133.

*Indra*—is the principal God of Rigveda 36, is repudiated by Zarathustra 36, swears vengeance on Mazda-yasnis 42, is worshipped in Asia Minor 50, develops into Visnu 65.

*Indo-Iranian War*—In Vedic age 49, in the age of Mahabharata 93, allies of Duryodhana were Iranians 117.

*Iqbal*—professes to be a Sufi 222, has sympathy with the Wahabis 151, 222, ridicules Hafiz 222, dislikes Iranian influence 222, suffers from inferiority complex 221, designs Pakistan 227.

*Ira*—Vedic name for Iranian culture 106.

*Iran*—attacked by Mongolians and Semites 77, named in the Veda as (i) Ira 106 (ii) Irina 30, 73 and (iii) Ilaspada 38, pre-Islamic Iran is rich in philosophy 163, its influence on the Koran 27.

*Iranians*—in the age of the Mahabharata observe no caste 81, Kshatriyas are the priests 81, expose dead body 118, drink camel's milk 81, intermarry with Indians 118, are derided by Salya 81, are nicknamed as 'ye yajamahe' 82, some are eager to revert to Mazda yasna 239, revive their culture 130, are national in outlook 133, settle in India 123, keep up connection with India 129, should not abjure the Gatha 211.

*Iranian kings and sages*—mentioned in the Rigveda 116.

*Iranian provinces*—mentioned in the Veda 43.

*Iranian*—hankers for Mazda yasna 216, 238.

*Iranian creeds*—are incorporated into Islam 133.

*Iranian words*—in the Koran 137.

*Islam*—is a modification of Judaism 136, agrees with the Dina portion of Mazda yasna 225, is wanting in Cisti 175, did not conquer Mazda-yasna 174, was metamorphosed by Mazda yasna 175, not inconsistent with loyalty to Gatha 183, 224, 232, the pillars of Islamic theology 190, modern movements for its reformation 220, adopts five times prayer of the Iranians 137, a religion of law 295, austere dignity of Godhead its noblest feature 234.

*Ismailism*—earliest movement for the reformation of Islam 135, 143, revived Iranian dogmas 133, first development of Shiaism 230.

## J

*Jalal*—is the prince of Sufis 178, compared with Ghazzali 187, echoes the voice of Zarathustra 219, is as good as a prophet 185, appreciated Mansur 156, 177, looks upon Khoda as darling 240, takes the marrow out of the Koran 184, explains Koran by the principles of the Gatha 152, 237, offers homage to Zarathustra 181, 194, 235, 236, comes of pure Aryan stock 178, 229, his views on conversion 224, converts Islam into an ally of Mazda yasna 234, his Iranian blood cries out 236, desired a synthesis 237.

*Jand-i-Shahpur*—university at 126.

*Jehangir*—disapproves the mode of expression of a Sufi poet 241.

*Jews*—polytheistic and idolatrous for six centuries after Moses 136.

*Judaism*—imitates Mazda-yasna 137, is reshaped by Nehemiah and Jeremiah 137.

*Jnana yoga*—meaning of 84.

## K

*Kabir*—not a disciple of Ramananda 198, his Rama may be Parsu Rama 199, 204, representative of Saiva cult 204, differs from Shekh Taki 199, consolidates the Indian school of Suffism 199, liberated Sufism from Arabic cloak 205, his love for Hindus 200, holds the key to Hindu-Muslim tangle 200, fore-runner of Hindu Reformation Movement 200, distinction from Nanak 202, 210, his example may be followed by Parsis 199, 241 prescribes the Seli 205.

*Kabir-Pantha*—resembles the religion of the Swetaswatara upanisad and the Gatha 201, use the Seli 205, distinction from Nanak Pantha 202, mistaken to be a branch of Hinduism 241.

*Kabul*—under a Hindu King 154.

*Kadiriya*s—learn the doctrine of “freedom of will” from the Parsis 169.

*Kapila*—honoured by the Swetaswatara school 111.

*Karma yoga*—meaning of 83.

*Kai Keyi*—daughter of the king of Armenia 117.

*Kekaya*—vedic name for Armenia 43, 117.

*Keresani*—interdicts Angirasa Veda.

*Khalifa*—head of Islamic theocracy 193, three (out of four) murdered by so-called Musalmans 194.

*Khetwavadata*—solves a riddle of life 168.

*Khizir*—prophet of Sufism 135, may be the same as Bhriгу (Parsu Rama) 180, Prophet of Prophets 179, approved in Koran 135, 179, Jalal pays homage 181, 193, Gatha as the Gospel of Khizir 181, his influence on Jalal, Kabir and Nanak 156.

*Khorasan*—is Kuru-Sravana of the Veda 115.

*Khuda*—corresponds to Swadha of the Veda 69, disliked by Mollas 69, substituted by Allah 69.

*Kisti*—is the Vedic term for Zend Cisti 180.

*Koran*— a second edition of Zend-Avesta 80, the first book written in Arabic 162, confirms Old Scriptures 218, teaches Dina portion of Mazda yasna 196, excellent book for teaching the primary truths of religion 195, 197, emphasises Monotheism and Aniconism 140, 150, does not teach esoteric truths 151, Sufism is its  $\frac{5}{7}$  th chapter 162, 177, poor in theism 9, vacillation on important problems 163, doctrine of Brahma wanting 160, refers to Iranians as pre-Koranic Muslims 142, nowhere addresses Allah as father 160, contradictions in the Koran 150, 163, difficult to understand 163, may mislead 151, 197, the theory of abrogation 140 150, Sufistic interpretation of Koran 185, not inconsistent with allegiance to Gatha 183 232, compiled in 23 years 139, Tales of Ancients 145, was intended for Ali, 131 unauthorised versions destroyed 132.

*Koresh*— a branch of the Beduins 238 (foot note).

*Kshatriya*—becomes Brahmin 108, acts as a priest 81,

*Kshatriya ideal*—praised in the Mahabharata 78.

*Kuru (Cyrus)*—praised in the Bible 120, protects the Jews 120, is contemporary of Vatsa 121.

*Kurus*—shift to Kausambi 119, shift to Persia 119.

*Kundalini*—is coiled up spiritual energy 198, adopted by Sufis 198.

## L

*La ilahi il Allah*—meaning of 186.

*Language*—similarity between Darius and Asoka 121.

*Love*—is desire to give 163, its importance for God-realisation 146, 152, 228.

*Love of God*—indispensable 89, 182.



## M

- Madhu Sundan Saraswati*—three types of Bhakti yoga 167.
- Maghas (Magians)*—are Zarathustrians settled in India 68, mentioned in the Bhavisya Purana 123, largely Hinduised 68, envied in the Angirasa Veda 54, are admitted to be a People of the Book 135, 142.
- Mahat (Mazat)*—is Viswamitra's name for Mazda 57, 224, is a Deity recognized by the Rigveda 244.
- Maha bharata*—appreciates the views of Zarathustrianism 78, 80, date of the Mahabharata war 11, 120.
- Mahanirvana Tantra*—lays down principle of Synthesis 209.
- Mamun*—named Amir-ul-kafrin 131.
- Mani*—synthesises Zarathustrianism and Budhism 123, penalty for the murder of Mani and Mazdak 127.
- Mansur*—put to death for uttering An-al-Haq 177, claims ability to compose the equal of Koran 177.
- Manyus*—are equivalent of Gunas 82.
- Masnavi*—is the Scripture of the Sufis 178, 185, distributes the elixir of Khizir 181, is Koran in Persian 184, takes the marrow out of the Koran 184, introduces Gathic ideas into Islam 193, is the despair of Islam 184, book for all ages 193, may be considered as an exegesis to Gatha 193, 219, would prevent relapse into the religion of Yasta 218, its beauty 223, indispensable for understanding the Koran 150, furnishes all the higher truths of Islam 223. makes Islam an ally of Mazda yasna 234, Husamuddin is its soul 235.
- Matricide*—of Parsu Rama is figurative 105.
- Mazda*—corresponds to Vedhas 39, kills Vritra 46, 116, is transformed as Siva 61, 65, 205, is belauded in Rigveda 244. not a trading of god 238.
- Mazda-yasna*—Has greater resemblance to the ancestral cult 30, is the prototype of Saiva cult 204, 205, rejects plethora of

ceremonials 60, upholds equality of castes and races 60, was prevalent in Iran in the days of the Mahabharata 81, implants its ideal on Judaism and Islam 189 Its two portions—Dina and Cisti 151, conquers Islam 175, 184, 186, 190, is a world religion 236. graphic description in Rigveda 72, imported into India by (i) Narada 15 (ii) Viswamitra 57 (iii) Swetaswata 62 (iv) Mahabharata 17. (v) Skanda Purana 67, (vi) Bhavisya Purana 123, provides the force of antithesis in Vedic cult 246.

*Menander (Greek)*—adopts Buddhism 123.

*Mian Mirzi*—lays the foundation stone of the Sikh Temple of Amritsar 210, 211.

*Mithra*—is friend of Varuna 33, may mean Indra or Mazda 33, 58, was worshipped by Romans 33.

*Moghal Emperors*—influenced by Aryan religion 200, Moghal version of Mazda-Yasna 242.

*Mongols*—had been Buddhists 192, became Moghals 192.

*Monism*—ethical and metaphysical 95.

*Monotheism*—of the Gatha 35, is based on Monism 96.

*Moses*—founds Judaism 136, a disciple of Khizir 135.

*Muhammad*—uses more than one name for God 32, appreciates Mazda Yasna 80, adopts five times prayer in emulation of Zoroastrians 142, tolerates other religions 146.

*Muhammad Shah*—adopted Siv-Narayani creed 154.

## N

*Nahavand*—battle of 176, victory of Nahavand nullified 174.

*Nanak*—synthesised Hinduism and Parsi-ism 209, discarded Hindu custom in public life 209, welcomes Sufism 69, 205, contrast with Kabir 202, 210, follows the lead of Agama 209, pays more attention to national life 206, honoured

Sri Krisna 202, reconciled Koran to Sufism by prefising "Baba" to Allah 245, is tolerant of Hinduism 154, 156, 207, 209, appreciates Mother cult 245, restores Cisti to its original status 69, shouted "la ilahi il Allah" 202, laid foundation of the Brotherhood of Man 210, said that Islam does not teach more truths than the Atharva Veda 201, is misunderstood by the Arya Samajists 200, saves Aryan culture 206, 210, welcomes Atharva Veda 69.

*Narada*—imported Bhakti cult from outside India 17, approached Zarathustra 15, recited the Gatha in the court of Brahma 16, learnt Satwata cult from Parsu Rama 105.

*Narayaniya sections of Mahabharata*—give an account of Mazda-Yasna 15, do not refer to Christianity 17, why called Narayaniya 68.

*Nasadiya Sukta*—solves the problem of being and becoming 162.

*Nausirvan*—most famous of Sassanian kings 125, founded the university of Jand-i-Sahapur 126, imported Panca-Tantra and Caturanga play 126, Muhammad was born during his reign 125, 129.

*Neo-Sufism*—would be the future religion of Iran 214, 218.

*Nodhas (son of Gautama)*—adopted Mazda yasna 110.

## O

*Occam's razor*—in the matter of Gunas 82.

*Om*—is changed to Hon 47.

*Omar*—burns the library of Alexandria 126, is disliked in Iran 146.

*Osman*—destroyed unauthorised versions of Koran 132.

## P

*Padma Purana*—does not appreciate the worth of Parsu-Rama 78.

*Panca-Ratra*—prototype of Vaisnavism 48, Iranian in origin 49.

*Panca Kosa*—five planes of existence 165.

*Panca Sikha*—famous doctor of Panca-ratra school 110, is converted to Mazda-Yasna 111.

*Panini*—born in Afganisthan 107, was familiar with Avesta 45, his aphorisms govern the Zend language 107, familiar with the Persian race 114.

*Parsi*—does not despair—148.

*Parsu*—the name of the country 114, the name of the race 114.

*Parsu-Rama*—is the replica of Zarathustra 22, was born in the beginning of the Treta age 19, aspersion of genocide and matricide is only figurative 104, is taught by Siva 62, becomes a prophet through the grace of Siva 64, upholds the Kshatriya ideal 104, his worship is disparaged in the Padma Purana 78, inherits the name of his father 103, mentioned in the Rigveda 22, is immortal 180.

*Parthia*—a unit of Trisadha 114.

*Pauru saspa*—is the father of Zarathustra 109.

*Personal God*—relation with Impersonal 99.

*Philosophy*—in pre-Islamic Iran 163.

*Pitri Yana*—meaning of 42, contrast with Deva Yana 116.

*Pour-i-Davood*—is attracted by Mazda-Yasna 239, recommended the worship of Siva 67.

*Premananda Tirthaswami*—an admirer of Bijoy-Krishna Goswami 245, encouraged the spread of Mazda Yasna 245, laid whole importance on belief in the existence of God 195, used to say that Kabir holds the key to the solution of Hindu-Muslim tangle 200.

*Prisni*—is the gift of Varuna to Atharvan Veda 73, is posterior to the Gatha 75, is interspersed in the Angirasa Veda 73. is the earliest Scripture of Hinduism.

*Prophet*—equality of all prophets 212, 221.

## R

*Rājas Guna*—discarded by Zarathustra 82.

*Raji (brother of Nahusa)*—founds Rai the birth place of Zarathustra 115.

*Ramacandra*—is the representative Prophet of Hinduism 191, 244, was born at the end of Treta age 19, replica of Venacandra 21.

*Ramanuja*—the typical Prophet of Bhakti Yoga 85, does not repudiate Adwaita 167, prescribes union through Samarasya 167, does not approve merger in Brahma 169. is called an Asuri 167, explains the underlying philosophy of Mazda Yasna 240.

*Rama Krisna Param Hansa*—Apostle of Sakti cult 204, pays more attention to individual life 206.

*Ramananda*—is not the preceptor of Kabir 198.

*Ram Mohan Ray*—adopts the principles of Zarathustra 69.

*Ranjit Sinha*—occupies Lahore 155.

*Rasa (Tigris)*—is the Ranha of Avesta 112.

*Rigveda*—earliest book of the Aryas 75, does not ignore Pitri-Yana 176, is Indo-Iranian scripture 73, some of its hymns were composed in Iran 73, 116, arrangement not chronological 74, references to Zarathustra 22.

*Religion*—presents substance of philosophy 212, does not thrive by mere profession 149.

*Religious month*—apportioned between Hindu and Parsi 211, 243.



*Rudra*—affinity with Mazda 60, becomes Siva 60, is the God of the re-united Aryas 41, is both deva and asura 72.

*Rudras*—are the Saivas of the Veda 41.

## S

*Sabilan hills*—place of Zarathustra's tapasya 77, 109.

*Saiva Cult*—Originally monotheistic, aniconic and casteless 62, Parsu Rama is the Prophet of the cult 62, is now largely Hinduised 62.

*Salman*—was Zarathustrian by birth 138, is the first Iranian to adopt Islam 147, reason for adopting Islam 142, member of Nusayrian Trinity 142, 151, suspected of having a hand in the composition of Koran 145, is the first Shiah 143, teaches the art of digging moats 141, bears Aryan name 143 (foot-note).

*Santkara carya*—is the typical prophet of Jnana Yoga 84.

*Sanskrit*—used to be spoken in Persia 121.

*Sapta Sindhu*—Vedas composed in 106, gives rise to the name of Hindu 106, common platform for the Indians and the Iranians 105.

*Sarama*—crosses the Rasa (Tigris) 112, goes to the land of the Panis 112.

*Saraswati*—is the religious name of the Sindhu 106.

*Sarmad*—is beheaded by Aurangzeb 162.

*Sassanians*—were zealous Zarathustrians 123, cause of their downfall 149, 153, 158.

*Satan*—derived 83.

*Satra*—is congregational prayer 243.

*Sat-Cit-Ananda*—crowning glory of Vedanta 93.

*Satya Narayana*—is Ahura Mazda 67, his worship is pre-Islamic 68, described in Skanda Purana 67, origin of the name 68.



*Satapatha Brahmana*—relates the conflict between Devas and Asuras 46.

*Satwata Religion*—is worship of Personal God 15, Prototype of Vaisnavism 49.

*Semitic religions*—deficient in philosophy 164.

*Shahpur*—captures Roman Emperor Valerian 125.

*Shah-namah*—95% words are Sanskritic 121.

*Shiah-ism*—is the revolt of the Iranians against Islam 131, 134.

*Shias*—admit Zarathustrians to be a 'people of the book' 135, are the best friends of Islam 231.

*Shekh Taki*—complains to Sikandar Lodi against Kabir 199.

*Sikandar Lodi*—throws Kabir into the Ganga 199.

*Shubiya movement*—is resurrection of Iranian culture 130.

*Siva*—very similar to Mazda in essential features 60, 205, is unfailing patron of Asuras 53, opposition of Daksha to Siva cult 61, is the god the Asura worshippers 216.

*Siva Temples*—in Persia and Afghanistan 176.

*Sikh Panth*—A synthesis of Hindu-ism and Parsi-ism 246.

*Sirat*—is Cinvat bridge of the Gatha 137.

*Skanda Purana*—was composed before Musalmams came 68.

*Solon*—teaches according to the capacity of the pupil 151.

*Soul*—Koran does not distinguish between Mind and Soul 161, Sufi sees God in the Soul 161.

*Spitama*—means white-most 103, is Sukra of India 44, 115.

*Sri Krishna*—synthesises the gospels of Ramacandra and Zarathustra 244.

*Sufism*—is the revival of the Cisti of the Gatha 175, 326 infuses Brahma into Islam 100, is now the vital element of Islam 175, schools of Sufism 197, Indian and Iranian 199, 205, theories about its origin 158, is the Elixir of Khizir 193

is <sup>8</sup>/<sub>7</sub> th chapter of Koran 162, 177, reason for its absence in Koran 151, all Doctors of Sufism were Iranians 176, may be traced to Bhrigu 180, contrasted with Gopism 241, proclaims equality of all prophets 212, 221, does not revive Iranian cult to the full extent, ( is the second development of Shia-ism ) 230, Bahaism goes a step further than Sufism 230, Iranian Sufis prefer the love of the husband 241, started in Sassanian period—174.

*Sufi*—is a Bhakti, Yogin, 166 introduces Vedanta in the Koran 186.

*Sunahotra*—is converted to Mazda-Yasna 56.

*Sultan Mahmud*—uses Sanskrit in his coins 176, enters India in 1001 A. D. 154.

*Supra-mental Consciousness*—is a fact 90, implies immortality 91.

*Sukra*—popular name of Bhrigu 103, equivalent of Spitama 115.

*Swetaswatara Upanisad*—is the basic Scripture of the Saiva sect 64, meaning of the name 12, 63, is inspired by the Gatha 12, 64, is more systematic than Sata-Rudriya 64. is monotheistic, aniconic and casteless 64.

*Symposium of Religions*—convened by Zarathustra 215.

## T

*Tantra (Agama)*—absorbs principles of Mazda Yasna 53.

*Tilak*—fixes the beginning of Veda at 5000 B. C. 11

*Traditions of Islam*—many are spurious 227.

*Tri-sadha*—United States of Parthia, Persia, and Media 113, 114.

*Trikuti bhanga*—establishes supremacy of mind (consciousness) over matter 171.

## U

*Ugra Manyu*—is vedic version of Angra Manyu 75, 95, proves the priority of Bhargava Veda 75.

*Upanisads*—discourage Yajna (formal worship) 48.

*Upastha*—is equivalent of Avesta 2, Recognition of Upastha as the Bhargava veda is key to the interpretation of Vedic Religion 56.

*Usana ( Kavya )*—is Kai Kaus of Iran 79, admirer of both Indian and Iranian cults 70, mentioned in the Gita 71.

## V

*Vahma*—corresponds to Brahma of the Upanisads 95.

*Vardhamana Jina*—Typical Prophet of Dhyana yoga 84.

*Vaisnava, Saiva and Sakta*—Characteristic features of 203.

*Varuna*—is Indo European 29, 44th name of Ahura Mazda 51, is called Vedhas by some people 52, is superseded by Indra 56, contrast with Indra 29.

*Vasista*—Special priest of Varuna 49, 51, 115, conflict with

*Viswamitra* 59.

*Vasistas*—are intimate with Bhrigus 53.

*Vasus*—are the Vaisnavas of Vedic age 41.

*Vasu (King)*—is Vistaspa of the Gatha 14, 116, had an airship 19, 116, gave verdict in favour of the use of flesh 14.

*Vatsa (King)*—contemporary of Kuru ( Cyrus ) 121.

*Vedic*—Princes and Sages live in Iran 115.

*Vedic name*—of Iranian provinces 115.

*Vedanta*—its influence on Sufism 158, does not support Arambha vada 164.

*Veda*—oldest book in world's library 1, originally consisted of three books 1, are five in number 2, the system of its

pantheon 40, solves the problem of Being and Becoming 162, fore stalls Hegelian dialectics 162, does not preach Nature worship 32, does not preach polytheism 40, Six principal gods of the Veda 40.

*Veda and Avesta*—affinity between 10, are contemporaneous 10.

*Vedhas*—not a new coinage 38, cognate with *Medhas* 39, is a cardinal God 40, feats of *Vedhas* are attributed to *Indra* 40, reason of *Zarathustra's* selection 42.

*Vena*—received the *Prisni* 79, may be a name for *Rama Candra* 21, 74, propounds the philosophy of *Monism* 74.

*Vijnana Vada*—of *Budhist Philosophy* 173,

*Visnu*—a development of *Indra* 66. is God of love 41, 203, is the New *Mazda* 66, *Asuras* permit use of a land for his worship appeared in the form of a girl 241. His three steps represent *Hegelian dialectics* 162,

*Visnu hymns*—grew out of *Varuna hymns* 240.

*Vritra*—legend common to *India* and *Iram* 116.

## W

*Wahabism*—is a reactionary movement 220.

*Wahabis*—dislike *Sufism* 151, 220.

## X

*Xerexes*—attacks *Greece* 120.

## Y

*Yajata Yasna*—is *Deva Yasna* in disguise 153, is the cause of the downfall of the *Sassanians* 153.

*Yajur Veda*—connotation of "*Asura*" as aniconic 26, *Asuri metres* in 74.

*Yajna*—substituted by *Puja* 48, 242, revived by *Agama* 54, retained by the *Parsis* 54, should not be given up 218, 242, as ceremonial prayer 218.



*Yama and Manu*—the earliest Patriarchs of India and Iran 107.

*Yasta*—its affinity with Deva yasna 158, a deviation of the pure religion of Yasna 225.

*Yogas ( disciplines )* four in number 83.

*Yugas*—four traditional ages 11,

*Yajnopavita*—Zarathustra wears at the age of 15 109, Kabir adopts as Seli 205, Hafiz wears under his cloak 194, Jala would gladly wear 194, Omar Khaiyam prefers to wear 194, Amir Khasru would have worn 195.

## Z

*Zamad Agni*—is the equivalent of Zarathustra, 104.

*Zarathustra*—called Atharvan in the Avesta 21, and likely in Rigveda as well 21, mentioned as Rama in the Rigveda 22, 105, meaning of the name 62, first to protest against Deva yasna 26, goes back to ancestral religion 37, selects the name 'Vedhas' 37, reason for rejecting the name Varuna 37. rejects Rajas Guna 82, rejects plethora of rituals 59, rejects the Indra cult 36, preaches rational Bhakti yoga 99, evolves the system of Amesaspentas 85, first prophet, first warrior and first husbandman 109, preaches equality of man. (i) caste equality 80, (ii) race-equality 238. preaches unity of mankind 213, 229, preaches "Internationalism through nationalism" 233, not satisfied with own salvation 77, combines metaphysics and common sense 218, age of the prophet 7, his genealogy 107, born in the family of Bhrigus 100, wishes to know the truth of religion 77, His mission 77, leaves his father's house 6, 109, tapasya at Saliban hills 6, 109, obtains illumination 6, 109, preaches his religion 77, 109, converts Vistaspa 110, convenes the earliest

symposium of religion 214, converts brilliant sages of India and Greece 111, Asa staff converted into a hatchet 28, stabbed by Vritra Kus 112, designated as "Husam-ud-Din" by Jalal 194, would come back to Iran 216, is already hailed 216, did not come for Iran alone 215.

*Zarathustra tama*—meaning of the designation 63.

*Zarathustrians*—left Iran 128, settled in India 128.

*Zravana Akarana*—is Brahma of the Upanisads 96.



## ERRATA

Page	Line	Wrong	Correct
14	28	सचम	सचम
16	13	सरहस्य	सरहस्यं
25	27	रुद्रा	रुद्रा
31	10	सती	सुती
34	5	worshipped	worshipped
36	9	विषक्ष	विषक्ष
36	13	benifit	benefit
36	17	onlo	only
39	20	अजिन्वन	अजिन्वन
40	2	ब्रवन्ति	ब्रुवन्ति
40	3	जनीर	जनीर्
40	19	Vedhas	Vedhas,
40	24	developmet	development
42	17	गात्रबो	रात्रबो
43	28	पृथ	पृथु
44	7	अग्निरष्टम	अग्निरष्टम
46	7	ब्रवन्ति	ब्रुवन्ति
49	16	Ind.	Indo
52	14	drowing	drowning
52	21	uponisad	upanisad
56	24	विद्या	विद्मा
59	17	th	the
64	13	अचक्षः	अचक्षः
71	10	यज्ञर	यज्ञैर्
80	11	क्षभा	क्षधा
94	28	pesence	presence
99	22	ईश्वर	ईश्वर
99	28	ब्रुते	ब्रूते
102	19	reminbe t	remember it



105	18	dilvne	divine
107	19	becomes	become
127	1	Christean	Christian
143	19	Irasian	Iranian
143	20	strnckly	strictly
147	15	मत्री	मैत्री
153	5	Atharavan	Atharvan
155	18	तेनव	तेनैव
155	18	चतुर्मुंजेन	चतुर्मुंजेन
165	27	आवृत्	आवृत
165	27	स्वात्मा	स्वात्मा
167	19	तस्यैवाहम्	तस्यैवाहम्
167	20	"His	His"
185	29	tha	the
202	last	reath	breath
206	17	anihilation	annihilation
207	8	suport	support
208	80	duluded	deluded
216	80	Prophet	Prophet
244	12	मृण्यः	मृण्यः
248	14	Mazdra	Mazda
250	7	ब्रवन्ति	ब्रूवन्ति
250	9	शृणौत्	शृणोतु
250	12	विष्यवे	विष्णवे



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